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BIBLE HARMONY:

A STUDY OF THE BIBLE AS A WHOLE,

SHOWING THAT FROM GENESIS TO THE REVELATION
IT IS A PERFECTLY HARMONIOUS HISTORY
OF THE PROGRESSIVE CREATION
OF MAN.

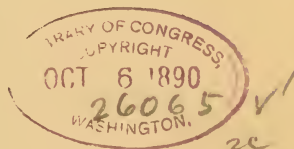
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A. P. ADAMS, M.A.

“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy Word was
unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.” — JER. xv. 16.

“I create evil, I, JEHOVAH.” — ISA. xlv. 7.

SECOND EDITION.



BEVERLY, MASS. :
DROWEHT PUBLISHING COMPANY.

1890.

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PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.



THE present volume has grown out of two pamphlets published in 1882, respectively entitled "Bible Theology" and "Endless Torments not Scriptural." The substance of those two pamphlets is incorporated into the present volume, with much additional matter; the whole rewritten and rearranged in such a manner, it is hoped, as will better conserve the end intended, viz. the presentation of suggestive thought in the way of truth. The author does not claim that in the following pages he has presented the absolute truth; but he hopes that the reader will find much suggestive thought in the *line* of truth, which will prove a help in the way of life, — that life which is knowledge of God, and of him whom he has sent (John xvii. 3).

Two objects especially moved the author to this work. First, to show that the Bible is a book of glorious harmony throughout; and second, to show the *process* of creation. The reader will judge whether these two objects have been accomplished.

In harmony with the first object the title of the book was changed from Bible Theology (the title of the first edition) to Bible Harmony. It was thought that the latter title would express more nearly the

scope and purpose of the book, and would be less liable to misapprehension. The word *theology* has a conventional meaning, and to many persons it conveys an idea of something dry, uninteresting, and repellent; it is a grand word in itself, but in the minds of many it is associated by general usage with the above ideas. Furthermore, I did not wish to imply by the title of the book any reflection upon any work of a similar character; to call it Bible Theology seems to insinuate that it stands alone in this respect. I wish to convey no such idea; it is only with "all saints" (Eph. iii. 18) that we are able to apprehend all truth. I give in the volume a brief summary of my thought on Bible subjects, as it has come to me from various sources during the last twelve years. These views seem to me to harmonize the Bible in all its parts, better than any other views that have ever come to my knowledge; hence the title, Bible Harmony.

I will add that the book is not written for scholars nor for theologians, but for those who have received "the *love* of the truth" (2 Thess. ii. 10), for the truth's sake, and prize it above all things else; it is written, as already intimated, not so much to lay down positive doctrines, as to suggest fruitful lines of thought, and to start inquiry, that the Word may be more fully opened up to the reader.

One other remark, — and to this I ask the reader's strict attention. I have been especially careful in all Bible quotations, that they should be correct and true to the original. But the Bible student will

notice variations in my quotations from the common version, and I have not always given the reference to chapter and verse. In regard to the variations I will say that none of them are made without the best authority, which the reader will usually find by referring to the margin of the old version, or to the text or margin of the new. I have omitted the references because the quotations are so numerous that the insertion of all the references would needlessly encumber the page. With the help of a concordance (which no one interested in the Bible should be without) every passage may be easily found, and by consulting the old and new versions, text and margin, the variations will be accounted for. In some very few cases I have quoted from the original, or from versions other than those indicated above; such quotations, however, will be found to be fully verified in the context.

I would add that I make no claim of originality in the thoughts here presented. God, by his spirit, has made me rejoice many times in my meditations and study, by showing me "wonderful things out of his law." Dear saints, too, to whom I am glad to be indebted, have been the channels through whom "unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, has this grace been given." As another has said, "Wherever it can be shown that we are not original, so much the better; our desire should be to enter the circle of the great dependence of all things, assured that there is no independence of heart or mind on any other terms." At least I may say for myself,

that I have spoken from the depths of a most profound conviction. "Having the same spirit of faith, I *believed*, therefore have I *spoken*." The great joy I have had in these precious truths is such that I desire to make others partakers with me; hence this volume. I have drawn freely from every source available for fact and argument, my purpose being to give the reader the strongest evidence possible on points advanced; I would not sacrifice force, and strength, and clearness, for the sake of a strained originality; it is the *truth* we want, no matter from what source it may come; it is the truth that sanctifies (John xvii. 17) and makes us *free* (John viii. 32). May God give us this freedom—freedom of brain, and mind, and heart, that we may "*grow* in grace" and "*go on* unto perfection," untrammelled by traditions or superstitions. With Faber I exclaim,—

"Oh, for freedom! for freedom! in worshipping God,
For the mountain-top feeling of generous souls,
For the health, for the air, of the hearts deep and broad,
Where grace, not in rills, but in cataracts rolls."

And now unto the Lord of the harvest is this effort committed, trusting that there is here some "good seed," that it will fall into "good ground," and bring forth fruit to the honor and glory of him who alone can give the increase.

BEVERLY, MASS., August, 1890.

BIBLE HARMONY.



INTRODUCTION.

It is a sad fact, widely noted and deeply deplored by every lover of humanity and of God, that the spectacle that the Christian church presents in the world to-day is one of discord, inconsistency, and failure. By the Christian church I mean the nominal Christian church as an outward, visible organization of men and women, having for its ostensible object the inculcation and advancement of religion and morality.

I designate no particular branch of the church, as Protestant or Catholic ; I refer to no particular sect or denomination, but apply the above remark to the nominal Christian church as a whole. I say that this ecclesiastical organization presents, first, a spectacle of discordancy and variance, forasmuch as we see it broken up into numberless parties and clans, all calling themselves by the name of Christ, and yet for the most part entirely lacking in organic union, to a considerable extent opposed to one another, and in not a few instances aggressively and even bitterly antagonistic. This is simply a fact which no honest

intelligent person will deny. We will briefly note one or two illustrations.

A correspondent writing home from Japan informs us that fronting on a certain square in that country are the headquarters of twelve Christian missions, all working separately and some in opposition to one another. What a spectacle for the heathen mind to contemplate of the "one body" of the "one Lord"! Is it any wonder, as the correspondent adds, that the Japanese people write to the mission authorities at London, "Don't send us any more different *kinds* of Christianity"?

In the *Magazine of Christian Literature* for April is an article by Dr. James McCosh, ex-president of Princeton College, on "Federation of Churches to secure that the Gospel be preached to Every Creature." The learned writer first remarks on the importance of our Lord's command to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, and greatly deplores the fact that "nearly nineteen centuries have run their course, and yet this command has not been fulfilled." He attributes this failure to the lack of union among the various Christian sects, and continues thus: "I am pained and perplexed more than I can tell to find that in consequence, to a large extent, of the separation of the churches, the Lord's command has not been carried out and the gospel preached to every creature. I feel as if at the judgment day some one might stand up and plead against us on this account. So I have been anxiously pondering the question whether, prior

to our reaching a full union of the churches, there might not be a practical means of bringing them to such a union as to have our Lord's command obeyed. If we cannot yet have an *Incorporation*, let us have a *Federation*."

What a confession the above words imply! How deplorable is that condition of the church it sets before us! The Saviour's latest and most important command unfulfilled, because there is not sufficient agreement among his professed children to act together! There are numbers enough; there is wealth enough; there is abundance of every requisite and supply: what a power the whole Christian church would be, all consecrated and united! What could they *not* do then! But alas! they are divided into numberless factions, and in many instances are wasting their energies *against* one another, instead of laboring together as one united family; and the consequence is that the dark portions of the continents must wait for the enlightenment that the Lord's disciples could give them, until differences of opinions and variations of creeds may be adjusted and agreed upon. Meantime hundreds of thousands of human beings for whom Christ died are perishing every year, thrust into eternity without even so much as ever having heard the name of the true God, or of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Now the brother above quoted, like some others of God's children, has become impatient at this neglect, and in shame thereof and fear of the consequences he casts about to see if something cannot be done.

He sees the difficulty that lies in the way, and, despairing of overcoming it, he proposes a compromise, — not a union, but a federation, of the churches; that is, a loose association of the various sects for a given purpose, a coalition of convenience and expediency merely, while yet the elements of discord and variance are in full force and sway. How much, think you, would the Christian church accomplish by such a pseudo-union? Opposing political parties may thus join together sometimes in certain crises, and make common cause for the nonce, but the only union that is possible for the church of Christ is “the unity of the spirit” (Eph. iv. 3). Without this, it is helpless as an organization.

I have also said that the nominal Christian church presents to the world a spectacle of inconsistency. I do not think I need to give any extended proof of this proposition. Take the nominal Christian church as a whole all over the world, — Romish, Russian, Lutheran, English, the various sects in America, etc., — and try them by the precepts of Christ, — say the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, — and who will say that it will not be found radically and sadly wanting? Take the principles of self-denial, separateness from the world, non-resistance to evil, abandonment of worldly riches, quiet submission to wrong and injustice, almsgiving, fasting, humility, meekness, self-crucifixion, and such like, and what sort of exemplification do we find of these virtues in the average church membership? In short, is it not a sad fact that inconsistency is a general characteristic

of the nominal church, the standing reproach of Christians in the eyes of the world, and to such an extent that it can be truthfully said of the church of to-day, as of the Jewish church in the days of the apostle, that the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you?

Again, I have said that the nominal Christian church stands before the world to-day as (to say the least) a partial failure. This is confessed on every hand; it is indicated in the quotation already presented from the article of Dr. McCosh that nearly nineteen centuries have passed, and yet the Saviour's command to preach the gospel to every creature has not been fulfilled. The fact is that nearly eighteen centuries had passed away, since the days of the apostles and their immediate successors, before the church *began* to obey that command; for all of the great missionary organizations of to-day have come into existence within the last hundred years, and notwithstanding all that has been done thus far, yet still

“the nations sit beneath
The darkness of o'erspreading death.”

One of the most striking presentations of the above sad fact appears in a new book by Dr. Charles Augustus Briggs, of the Union Theological Seminary, — a book bearing the significant and suggestive title of “Whither?” *i.e.* *whither* is the church drifting? This is the great question which the writer proposes, and tries to answer. Speaking of the failure of the church in missionary work, the author expresses him-

self thus: "The work of foreign missions has assumed vast dimensions in our times. The whole world has been opened to the preaching of the gospel. The Christian church has an opportunity of serving Christ such as it has never had before since the first advent of our Lord. Great progress in foreign missions has been made in the present century. But any one who looks at the vastness of the heathen world and the countless millions who have never heard of the glad tidings of redemption by Jesus Christ, and considers the wealth and power of Christian nations, will see that the Christian church has not grasped the situation, and that Christian people are incurring a dreadful guilt before God, if the doctrine of the lost condition of these heathen be a true one. It may well be asked which are the more guilty, those who need the gospel and have it not, or those who have the gospel and do not value it sufficiently to give it to those who cannot be saved without it? From this point of view it may be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Pekin, Calcutta, and Tokio than for London, New York, and Chicago."

In their mission work nearer home the church has even more signally failed. It would seem that the power of the church ought to be especially felt in the great centres where Christians are massed, in the great cities of the world, where there are hundreds and even thousands of churches and hundreds of thousands of nominal Christians; there if anywhere the church ought to be a mighty power to sway and

control and mould ; and yet the truth is that in just such centres as these, of all other places, the weakness and inefficiency of the church is most glaringly manifested. In these great cities wickedness runs riot, corruption reigns, the run power is most potent, and the masses are godless to the last degree, while the churches are very apt to be mere places of social resort for particular cliques of the respectable, having but little power or influence outside of its own narrow pale. In illustration of this point I will again quote from "Whither?": "One of the most distressing signs of the times is the failure of the church to evangelize the masses in the great cities. There is a chasm between the poorer classes and those who are comfortable and wealthy. The gospel is glad tidings to the poor, and yet the poor have not that interest in the gospel that we have a right to expect; the churches do not make sufficient provision for them, and do not reach them in any adequate measure. The free churches of America have failed in providing the gospel for the poor by private benevolence, no less than the established churches of Europe by inadequate provision of the state."

Thus, and in many other ways, is the failure of the church apparent. I do not disparage what the church has done. God forbid. But I say that in comparison with what, according to her resources, she might have done and what there *is* to do, what she *has* done is as nothing,—simply making her failure, on the whole, all the more apparent by comparison.

It is certainly, then, no misstatement, or unwarranted assertion, to say that the Christian church to-day presents to the world a spectacle of discord, inconsistency, and failure; and the consequences are a great loss of its power and influence, a lessening of its dignity and standing. The poor, who should be especially benefited by the preaching of the gospel, lose their confidence in the intentions and ability of the church; and the irreligious in the so-called upper classes, the cultured and refined, treat her pretensions with quiet disdain or open contempt. Meanwhile, the church itself, instead of standing before the world stately and dignified, respecting herself and commanding respect, seems rather inclined to bow to the world in many things, yielding to its unholy demands and seeking its support, pandering in many ways to its taste and truckling for its approval, thus forcibly reminding us of that apostate organization so suggestively symbolized in the Apocalypse (chap. xvii.) as a harlot woman seated on a beast; *i.e.* the unfaithful church, which should be the spouse of Christ (2 Cor. xi.), supported by the beastly world, — since a woman in scripture is a symbol of an ecclesiastical organization, and a beast is the symbol of the world-power (Dan. vii.).

Moreover, the church is greatly agitated over certain doctrinal questions, especially in regard to future retribution. Many in the churches are becoming disaffected and are diverging widely from the old orthodoxy. I speak advisedly when I say *old* orthodoxy; for the disaffected ones are so numerous, and

many of them stand so high in the church, that the conservative branch hardly dare call them heterodox, and so their position is designated as the "new orthodoxy." Thus we have existing *in* the church this paradoxical condition of things: viz. two systems of doctrine opposed the one to the other, and yet both "orthodox"! Such a state of things, implying as it does that things that are unequal to each other are equal to the same thing, contradicts axiomatic truth, and is a fair illustration of the confusion and disorder that prevails in modern theological circles. Of course, the term "orthodoxy" in the above phrases has lost entirely its broad, strict sense, and is simply used as a narrow technical term to indicate the dominant belief, whether right or wrong. The term that ought to be used is *Orthodoxism*; for orthodoxy in these modern times has degenerated to a mere *ism*. Upon this point I will quote again from Dr. Briggs.

"It is necessary to distinguish," he says, "between true orthodoxy and false orthodoxy — between orthodoxy and *orthodoxism*. *Orthodoxism* assumes to know the truth, and is unwilling to learn; it is haughty and arrogant, assuming the divine prerogatives of infallibility and inerrancy; it hates all truth that is unfamiliar to it and persecutes it to the uttermost. But orthodoxy loves the truth; it is ever anxious to learn, for it knows how greatly the truth of God transcends human knowledge; it follows the truth, as Ruth did Naomi, wherever it leads; it is meek, lowly, and reverent; it is full of charity and love; it does not recognize an infallible pope; it does

not bow to an infallible theologian ; it has only one teacher and master, — the enthroned Saviour, Jesus Christ, — and expects to be guided by his spirit into all truth.” A few paragraphs further the author continues thus : “ That man or church whose orthodoxy does not make progress ceases thereby to be orthodox, and from the necessities of the case becomes heterodox ; he refuses to accept the truth that is offered him by the advances in science, philosophy, history, and the more exact study of the sacred scriptures ; he is heterodox in that he falls short of the revealed truth that the truly orthodox have already accepted ; he is also heterodox in all that he does accept and teach ; for he keeps his thinking and teaching in the shadow of stereotyped forms of thought ; he declines to bring his knowledge into the full light of the truth, which like the sun has risen higher toward its zenith ; he prefers his darkness to the light of God ; he fears to look the truth in the eyes, lest he should be convicted of error, and be compelled to change his position, his convictions and statements. Intellectual timidity and cowardice are not consistent with Christian orthodoxy. True orthodoxy is brave, manly, and aggressive ; it marches forward. Truth is so connected and interwoven in an organism, that an advance in any department exerts an important influence upon the whole system. Any man or church that refuses to accept the discoveries of science, or the truths of philosophy, or the facts of history, or the new light that breaks forth from the word of God to the devoted student, on the pretence that it

conflicts with his orthodoxy or the orthodoxy of the standards of his church, prefers the traditions of men to the truth of God, has become unfaithful to the calling and aims of the Christian disciple, has left the companionship of Jesus and his apostles, and has joined the Pharisees, the enemies of the truth. ‘He that is born of God heareth God’s words.’ The man who has within him the spirit of truth, and is following the guidance of the divine spirit of truth, will hail the truth and embrace it, whether he has seen it before or not; and he will not be stayed by the changes that he fears may be necessary in his preconceptions or prejudices, or his civil, social, or ecclesiastical position. A traditional attitude of mind is one of the worst foes to orthodoxy. We have an infallible standard of orthodoxy in the sacred scriptures. God himself, speaking in his holy word to the believer, is the infallible guide in all questions of religion, doctrine, and morals.”

I am glad to give my readers this quotation, lengthy though it be; for in the first place, it says just what I wish to say myself, and, coming from one of reputation and acknowledged standing *in* the church, it will have more weight with some who are not willing to take truth for authority, but must have authority for the truth. Moreover, the above clearly defined distinction between orthodoxy and orthodoxism serves us two good turns: it rescues a good word from bad company. I have always felt somewhat loth to use the word “orthodoxy” in its conventional sense, as simply expressing the prevailing belief for the time

being, without any regard to its truth or falsity ; the word in its strict sense is positive and grand, and I have always felt it to be a shame to degrade it to the vague and narrow limits of the popular usage ; nevertheless it seemed needful so to use it. But Dr. Briggs gives us just the word we need for this popular idea, — orthodoxy, — that just expresses it ; and henceforth we may use the word “ orthodoxy ” only in its legitimate significance. He is orthodox who has received — not the whole truth, none are so endowed as yet, for “ that which is perfect ” has not yet come, — but he who has received “ the *love* of the truth ” (2 Thess. ii. 10) ; this is the *straight* way to “ the perfect man.” Thus we have an ill-used word rescued and a suitable word supplied ; and I would ask the reader to bear in mind that it is in the foregoing significance that these two words are used in the following pages of this volume.

Now, what is the drift in the churches of these unfavorable elements that we have noted ? Whither do they tend ? I answer, to *confusion* ; to perplexity, vagueness, and disintegration ; this is the condition into which the church *has* drifted ; a restless condition of doubt, uncertainty, and vacillation, stirred up, unsettled, drifting. On this point again we are supported by Dr. Briggs. The suggestive name of his book — “ Whither ? ” — indicates this, as already intimated. The headings of the ten chapters of his book indicate it still more significantly ; they are as follows : Drifting, Orthodoxy, Changes, Shifting, Excesses, Failures, Departures, Perplexities, Barriers,

Thither. Take these suggestive chapter-headings in connection with the title of the book itself — “Whither?” — and the terms will fairly express the true condition of the Christian church to-day; they constitute a perfect word-picture of its internal status.

One short sentence from the book will still further illustrate this. Speaking of a particular branch of the church, he says: “The Presbyterian church is not orthodox, judged by its own standards. It has neither the old orthodoxy, nor the new orthodoxy. It is in perplexity; it is *drifting* toward an unknown and a mysterious future.” What is true of this particular sect is no less true of the entire church; as a whole, it is most decidedly unsettled, perplexed, and drifting. Witness the so-called “Andover controversy” and the “new departure” movement; witness the widespread discussion on future retribution and general eschatology, especially the much-belabored doctrine of posthumous probation; witness also the serious disturbances and complications, amounting almost, if not quite, to a schism, even in the conservative, fixed, and professedly never-changing Romish church, led on by an ever-increasing number of disaffected priests, nuns, and other ecclesiastical officials. The whole Christian church is rent and torn, dismembered and distracted by these conflicting forces; in consequence of which it is shorn of its strength, like Samson bereft of his locks, and it stands to-day almost helpless before the giant evils that curse mankind, and ruthlessly trample on their rights, crushing alike body and mind and heart.

Millions of hands are stretched out to the church in this our day for help ; not alone in so-called heathen lands, but in Christendom, — in the very centres of church work, right where it is (or ought to be) the strongest in numbers, in wealth, and in social status ; millions of pairs of eyes wait upon her with longing expectation ; millions of overburdened hearts yearn toward her, knocking at her windows, beating at her doors, calling to her in accents of the deepest entreaty from the wide sea of life, asking for the bread of life, for body and mind, and in many cases receiving a stone, if not a scorpion. Verily the church does *not* reach the masses. Let the church then *beware* of the masses. It has been the history of the world that every institution, political, social, or religious, that wrongs or ignores the masses, is generally set aside and abolished *by* the masses ; and so will it be to the world's end. The masses belong to God ; He is the Father of the spirits of all flesh, — the One Universal Father. The *man* is more than the church (using the latter term in its general acceptation) ; or, in other words, it is more important to consider the worshipper than the form of worship ; or still broader, the *masses* are of more importance than any one class.

“ God, who counts by souls, not stations,
Loves and prospers you and me ;
For to him all famed distinctions
Are as pebbles in the sea.”

Thus the church to-day is tried at humanity's bar by its own standards, and found seriously wanting.

It does not fill the breach; it is not equal to the exigencies of the case; it is not adequate to the demand; in doctrine and practice it fails us. Why? How do we account for this sad declension? The church has wandered away from the fountain-head, from its base of supplies; it has "wandered out of the way of understanding"; it has, in a measure, "rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is there in it?" (Jer. viii. 9). "For my people have committed two evils, saith the Lord; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Here is the cause of the failure, and cause enough it is, too; and until this cause is removed failure will continue and increase, and disaster and ruin will follow. The church has lapsed from orthodoxy into mere orthodoxism; its traditional belief has become a serious stumbling-stone, blocking the way of progress and generally demoralizing both pulpit and pew.

Other pernicious effects follow this sad condition of things. For instance, what answer has the church to-day to such outspoken infidelity as that represented by Col. Robert Ingersoll? I do not mean what answer has it for theologians, but what answer has it for the masses? not an evasion or a makeshift, but an honest, straightforward answer? Is it not true that the church has failed to give such answer, and is not that tantamount in the eyes of the world to a confession of defeat? And furthermore, is not this tacitly admitted defeat strongly confirmed by

the admissions and concessions of eminent divines of high reputation in the church? Take, for example, the recent utterances of R. Heber Newton of New York. His series of sermons, recently printed and given to the public under the title of "The Right and Wrong Use of the Bible," are eminently calculated to give encouragement to infidelity and scepticism inside and outside of the church, and to weaken the confidence of many simple-minded Christians in the scriptures; so that, when asked by the blatant infidelity of the day, "Do you believe in 'that fish story' of Jonah and the whale?" they would feel inclined to hang their heads in confusion, ashamed to answer "Yes," although "that fish story" is fully endorsed by our Lord and Saviour.

Says Mr. Newton, in his sermon on the wrong use of the Bible, "Perhaps Elisha's iron axe-head did swim upon the water. I am prepared to believe almost anything after our spiritualistic mediums, and their exposers. Whether it did or did not concerns me no whit. I shrug my shoulders and read on. I cannot make out the historical fact which was the basis of the Red-Sea deliverance; nor do I care much to make out this or any other Old-Testament miracle; if I felt obliged to accept literally these stories, or to lose my faith in the voice of God which speaks through the men of the Bible, I should care greatly; in the true view of the Bible I am delivered from solicitude about these traditions, and am under no constraint of credulity. Those who can believe the story of Elisha and the bears, or of Elijah's

ascension into heaven, may ; those who cannot, need not ; and both alike should reverently read their Bibles, not for these tales of wonders, but for the still small voice of the eternal spirit sounding through holy lives and holier aspirations, until he came whose life was the Word of God, the Wonderful."

What is this, practically, but a complete relinquishment of the church's position on the scriptures, and a full surrender to the enemy ? When, according to the above extract, each one believes as much and such parts of the Bible as he pleases, then practically we have no Bible at all — no *divine* revelation. Little does it signify after publicly uttering, and afterwards printing and sending out to the world, such sentiments as the above, that this reverend gentleman, under the pressure of ecclesiastical authority, should add a footnote to the printed page to the effect that, "In what is said above there is no positive denial intended of the Old-Testament miracles." The mischief is done ; after speaking thus flippantly and slightly of Old-Testament miracles as "tales of wonder," there is no need of a formal denial of them ; they are practically held up to ridicule and contempt, with the covert implication that to believe in them is childish and absurd. Mr. Newton (as a sop to orthodoxism perhaps) may afterwards preach another series of sermons especially directed against infidelity of the Ingersoll type, and publish them under the euphonious title of "Philistinism" ; but it will not do ; he has practically surrendered to the genial colonel, and the latter may well excuse some little

“back talk” from one who has so handsomely capitulated; and yet this reverend gentleman still fills a Christian pulpit, and is therefore practically endorsed by the Christian church.

The effect of all this on “the common people” is to make them toss their hats and hurrah for Ingersoll, at the same time throwing the Bible aside as an antiquated volume long since out of date. Mr. Newton is not alone in these concessions and surrenders to infidelity; the so-called “liberal movement” is to a very great extent similarly characterized; in all departments of Christian activity we find preachers, writers, scholars, and professors making similar concessions, so that on every hand the iconoclasts are mutually congratulating one another on the prospect, in the near future, of the total subversion and abolishment of all revealed religion. This is a state of things that no one who reveres “the best of books” can contemplate without grave anxiety and deep concern, and yet they see no way out of it; there seems to be no corrective remedy at hand; they, themselves, in many cases, are not able to contend against modern criticism of the Bible; the church in its leadership seems rather inclined to yield to the pressure of skepticism, or else attempts to blink it out of sight instead of squarely meeting it face to face; and thus, simple, reverent souls are greatly perplexed and distressed, while the great mass of the church membership are altogether indifferent, or complacently satisfied with their own little, narrow, ecclesiastical enclosure. The theology of orthodoxism

is riddled and honeycombed, weak, inadequate, and inconsistent, and in some respects (as, for example, with reference to the dogma of endless woe) monstrous and absurd. It does not satisfy the truly devout, honest, thoughtful soul, though many such see no way to escape from its bondage except they go to the extreme of infidelity and atheism. For not only are the various creeds unsatisfactory and inconsistent in themselves, but they are mutually opposed one to the other. They all claim to be based upon the scriptures; but the defect in them all, as it seems to me, is that they do not harmonize the scriptures as a whole; parts of the Bible are unduly emphasized, and other parts are either ignored or explained away; thus scripture is arrayed against scripture, and thereby the whole is weakened.

The following pages are an effort in the line of Scripture Harmony. The writer has undertaken to suggest a course of Bible study that will lead to a solution of some of the difficulties of scripture interpretation, and will make harmony of the whole. The "Plan of the Ages" (chap. iv.), with all the grand and orderly truths connected with it, harmonizes the Bible as a whole, answers many of the great religious questions of the day, and reconciles many an apparent Bible contradiction. It seems as though something of this kind was needed in these days to save honest souls from being forced, on the one hand, into the position of the bigot and the hypocrite by remaining tacitly committed to a creed that they do not really believe, and, on the other, from what seems

to many, in their perplexity and confusion, the only alternative, — a total rejection of all beliefs depending on revelation, and the acceptance of the methods and conclusions of rationalism, pure and simple. For such inquiring ones, and with such a purpose, the following pages have been written, and are now presented to the Christian public, with the hope that they may contribute something toward the building up of the body of Christ, “till we all come in the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto the Perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

CHAPTER I.

INTERPRETATION.

HAVING thus shown in the Introduction the need of a new consideration of Bible truth, we proceed next to give the reader some idea of the rules of Bible interpretation adopted in the present volume. But first, to open the way for the enunciation of these rules, we wish to offer some general remarks in regard to the Bible itself.

THE BIBLE.

I accept the Bible, as we have it to-day in the original tongue, as the inspired Word of God, containing a true revelation of His will, and speaking unto man with divine authority. I do not consider, however, that the Bible is the only revelation of God that we have ; we may, indeed, truthfully say that we have **FOUR BIBLES** — the Book of Nature, the Book of Providence, the Written Word, and the Word Incarnate.

Nature surely reveals God. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.” There is a wonderful study of God in the world of nature around us. Everything in nature, from the mighty monarch

of the forest down to the single blade of grass ; from the lofty, cloud-capped mountain down to the pebble on the seashore ; rock, hill, and dale ; the rolling prairie or the boundless sea ; the starry heavens ; the ocean depths, all speak with one voice, — “ The hand that made us is divine.” “ The invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhood.”

God's Bible of Providence, the manner of his dealings with individuals, communities, states, and nations is full of light in regard to the character and will of our Heavenly Father. Take, for example, the history of the children of Israel — what a wonderful revelation of God is that history ! With its lights and shadows, its glory and its wretchedness, its special favor and its dreadful judgments, its successes and its failures — all revealing God in many phases of his character, so that by this history we come to know God as we never could have known him without it. Well might the apostle say in regard to this pattern people, this sample of humanity, “ Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples [types] : and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come ” (1 Cor. x. 1†). But not alone in the history of this ancient people does God stand revealed, but in the history of all nations, and in the individual experience of each son and daughter of the race ; and he that has “ eyes to see ” may trace the divine in the human at every step.

The Written Word is the principal subject of this volume, as we shall notice anon ; and the Word Incarnate is “the express image of the invisible God,” and every disciple is to be, in his measure, a likeness of the divine — “living epistles known and read of all men.” These last two revelations we are to study in the present work.

I accept the Bible, as we have it to-day in the original tongue, as the inspired Word of God. I mean by this the tongue in which it was originally spoken or written. The various versions are defective in some particulars ; words and phrases have been rendered to suit theological notions ; or, by carelessness or ignorance, in such a way as to be misleading, and, indeed, in a few instances, false ; hence it is of the highest importance that we should consult the original, and correct the versions and our own theology thereby. But some one asks, How is one to do this who has no knowledge of the original ? I reply, there are so many helps to the study of the Bible now, that any intelligent person, though he has no knowledge of any language but his mother tongue, may become thoroughly acquainted with all the various readings,* and the authority for each ; there are interlinear, word-for-word translations, that give, without fear or favor, the exact equivalents of the original words ; there are concordances so arranged that they show infallibly the meaning of the original by comparing the various passages where any given word or phrase occurs ; there are also various translations that are valuable for comparative study, together with

many similar helps; and all so arranged that if any one is really in earnest, though he may have nothing but a common-school education, he may have almost as good a chance to know the exact truth, so far as it can be ascertained, as the most accomplished scholar. There is no need in these days for any intelligent person to be ignorant of anything that belongs to critical Bible study, if only he is willing to search as men search for hid treasure.

I would add in this connection that even without these extra helps that I have mentioned above, with nothing in hand but the common English version and a good concordance, study and research will put one in possession of nearly all that he need to know to be thoroughly versed in Bible lore. If one will search the scripture for himself, observe the context, and compare passage with passage, taking nothing for granted, but searching daily to see whether these things be so (Acts xvii. 11), he need have no other help but the common English version and a concordance, *with the holy spirit*, to bring him to a knowledge of the "deep things of God."

But now another question. How do we know but that the scriptures as we have them, say in our English version (which I think is the best by far of all versions), are full of interpolations and spurious passages; or that important parts are lost so as to render the whole unreliable and misleading?

In answer to this question, I reason that if God has given us any written revelation of himself at all—if we have any Bible whatever—it seems to

me self-evident that he would care for that revelation so as to keep it essentially pure and uncontaminated. To suppose that God has given us a written revelation of his will, and has wonderfully preserved and protected it, as the Bible has been preserved and protected, yet that he has allowed that written revelation to become essentially defective by omissions or interpolations, by fraud or mistake, so that the book is unreliable and misleading, — to suppose such a thing, I say, is a reflection upon the wise providence of God, and upon his almighty power. It is not so much a question of human ability or interference as it is of the divine power and care. If the Bible is a revelation of God, it is God's book ; it makes no difference when the various parts were written, or by whom, it is the book of God, and he will care for and preserve his own ; and this divine providence is plainly visible in the history of the Bible, and is in fact a very strong evidence of its divine character. But what would all this amount to, if the Bible is a mixture of true and false, of genuine and counterfeit? for we have no test or criterion by which to tell decisively which is true and which is false, and the result would be practically that we should have no Bible at all ; or each one would make his own Bible according to his own idea and taste.

Again, I reason for the essential truthfulness of the Bible as a whole, because it is a reasonable, harmonious book throughout ; this proposition remains to be proved in the body of the book ; whether I prove it or not, the reader must judge after he has

thoroughly considered the matter ; but this much will be conceded I think at the outset, that if the Bible *is* proved to be reasonable and harmonious throughout, it would constitute a very strong evidence of its divine character and of its essential truthfulness. Humanly speaking, the Bible is not one book, but a collection of books, written by a score or more of different authors during a long-extended period of some two thousand years. Now if, notwithstanding this variety of writers and the protracted period of its formation, we still find an essential harmony between all its parts, and a vein of sound common sense and reason running through the whole, that would be a strong evidence that the book was not only essentially true, but also of divine authority ; for it is hardly possible to believe that so many authors, writing at so widely separated periods, without concert or agreement, should *happen* to harmonize with one another, especially when treating upon such deep and intricate subjects as those we find in the Bible.

The writer has been led into a line of Bible thought and study that has made beautiful harmony of portions of the Bible that once were dark and perplexing ; now light has shone forth on many of these “dark sayings,” and the whole Written Word has seemed to shine and glow like the face of the Word Incarnate on the transfiguration mount. Not all is clear, for as yet we only “know in part” ; but so much is clear and full of grand significance that once was dark and practically meaningless, that I

have a strong desire to start others thinking and studying in the same line, in hopes that they will be led to new mines of truth, so as to contribute in their turn to the general store, that with *all* saints we may be able to comprehend something of the breadth and length and depth and height of the marvellous love of God. The wonderful Bible harmony that these views bring out is satisfactory evidence to the writer that they are in the line of truth; and he hopes that he will be able to make this manifest to some of his readers. I am reminded right here, however, that not every one can see the truth when it is presented; they have no eyes. "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven." "The natural [animal] man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God." My feeling then is this: If I have any *truth* to give to God's children, those who are "of the truth" will receive it, and the rest will see no beauty in it, any more than the Jews saw in him who *is* the truth. Therefore I may be "careful for nothing," except to be a faithful witness up to the measure of my light, leaving it to the Lord to make it a savor of life unto life to whom he will. To return now to the subject of the Bible.

I have said that I accepted the Bible, as we have it to-day in the original tongue, as the inspired Word of God. But some one may ask, "Do you think that every word of the Bible is exactly true; are there no discrepancies, contradictions, interpolations, or mistakes?" I reply that I believe that the Bible is just

as God would have it. Its inspiration, I think, consists in this: viz. that God controlled the writers of the various parts only so far as to prevent them from making any essential mistake or omission, and that, aside from such control, they were left to tell their own story in their own style and manner, with such incidental discrepancies and minor mistakes as might creep into any human production. There are many things in the scriptures that thus manifest the common infirmities of mere human agents, but there is nothing of this kind that affects essential truth; nor is anything omitted that is needful for the full elucidation of such truth.

Let it be remembered in this connection that stumbling-stones are purposely left in the way in God's economy, and that "hard sayings," apparent contradictions, and discrepancies are a part of the discipline and training whereby the "senses" of the spiritual man are "exercised," so that he may be able to "discern both good and evil" (Heb. v. 14). It is a mistake to suppose, as it is sometimes alleged, that God's truth is always clear, plain, and self-evident; just the opposite of this is nearer the fact; the truth is covered up and obscured so that only he can know it to whom it is revealed. Jesus Christ himself is not only a corner-stone, but also a stumbling-stone, and so was it intended. "Unto you which believe he is precious; but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them

which stumble at the Word, being disobedient; whereunto also they were appointed"; and so the Written Word, like the Word Incarnate, is to some a stone of stumbling and rock of offence. He who walks in the light of God will find many of these dark places of scripture lighted up and made clear, and for the rest he must wait until God shall "make all things plain."

I come now to what seems to me the strongest evidence of the essential truthfulness of the Bible, viz. *its teachings correspond to the actual experience of "the life of God" in the soul.* The Bible sets forth two lives, that of "the old man" and of the new; "the life of the flesh" and the life of God; and on both of these plains its utterances are true to experience. The life of "the animal man" is therein set forth, especially in the history of the children of Israel; and that same life has been lived over and over again from that time to this. We live it; others all around us live it. Over and over again, in every generation, in endless repetition, is lived the life of Cain, of Canaan, of Ishmael, of Esau, of Achan, of Saul, of Ahab, and of all the rest of the examples of the animal man. We read these ancient records of the doings and sayings of these prominent characters and we recognize them true to life. They describe not simply men who lived then, but men who live now. As we read the account we say, "Yes, I know that man; he lives right across the street from me," or "the next door"; or perhaps our conscience directs us nearer home, and we say, "*That's me.*"

Especially in the history of the children of Israel do we behold as in a mirror the likeness of "the old man." Who has not traced his own experience in theirs? Who that has any knowledge of self has not seen and been humbled by the sight of his own perversity and folly in their waywardness and inconsistency? What Christian parent, familiar with the history of this pattern people, has not seen in his own children the same sinful propensities that they manifested, and been obliged to deal with them something as God dealt with Israel?

On the other hand, how plainly the Written Word sets forth the spiritual man — his birth, growth, and perfection! In Adam, created in the image and likeness of God, pronounced very good, and given universal dominion, we see in mystic prophecy what the spiritual man will be when perfected; thus, before God begins the work of man's creation, we see the prophetic picture of his finished state, as it was in the purpose and mind of God. With God the work is finished before it is begun; and so he speaks — of things that are not as though they were. In Cain and Abel we see the difference between the flesh and the spirit. In Noah we see regeneration. In Abraham appears the way of faith; in Isaac, the condition of sonship; in Jacob, that of service; in Joseph, the way of perfection and glory through suffering. In Moses we see man brought into the closest relations to God, so that the divine wisdom and power becomes his. In Joshua and the book of Judges we see the spiritual man as the saviour of his fellows.

In David we see the divine idea of conquest, and in Solomon the glorious reign of peace. And so on with every Bible character. What lives of devotion, self-sacrifice, and fearless championship of the truth do we behold in the prophets; their history and experience is the same as that of every one who has loved the truth, and stood for it, alone perhaps, amid a crooked and perverse generation. Isaiah with consecrated lips speaks to the heart of every one who has "entered into the sanctuary of the Lord," as did he (Isa. vi.), words of warning, of comfort, of unwavering trust, and of absolute assurance of the final triumph of the perfect good. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." Jeremiah suffers and weeps for the sins of his beloved people, and for the terrible judgments he sees coming on them, and yet no suffering, ignominy, or death shall deter him from his mission of warning and denunciation; for the Lord had made him a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land (Jer. i. 18). Behold, in him, the spirit of every God-armed reformer. The power moving him was the *truth*. The word of God was in his heart as a burning fire shut up in his bones, and he *could* not forbear (Jer. xx. 9). "Thy words were found and I did *eat* them," he exclaims, "and thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine

heart.” Does not every one whose eyes have been open to the truth know something of this experience? Ezekiel, the mystic of the Old Testament, as John is of the New, flashes through the heaven of prophecy, telling his marvellous visions of cherubic figures and of revolving wheels, of sparkling water, of gorgeous temples, and of magnificent cities; his is a character most unique, and yet not entirely unmatched in every age, among those who have known something of “the deep things of God.” How grand and soul-inspiring are the qualities manifested in the character of Daniel! Under the most trying circumstances he remains true,—proof, by the help of God, against all temptation. So with all the rest. Time would fail me to speak of them singly. In the history of every one we see the struggles and triumphs, the failures and successes, of the man of God. Read the Psalms. Is there a feeling, a passion, an inspiration, a longing, a sorrow, a fear, a hope, a joy, — *any* experience of heart or life, inward or outward, that does not in these divine songs find adequate and exact expression?

I cannot stay to speak of the New Testament particularly. It speaks to the heart; it sets forth a life, and therein lies the strongest proof of its divinity. First and pre-eminently in the life of Christ, as presented to us in the fourfold capacity indicated by the gospels: Christ the King, in Matthew; Christ the Servant, in Mark; Christ the Man, in Luke; and Christ the God, in John. The different stages of his life are the same as those of every believer, and

their destiny is also identical; for, as we “walk in him” here, so shall we finally come to the measure of the stature of his fulness, and be one with God even as the Father and the Son are one, — perfect in one. In the history of the early church and the letters of the apostles we have the same life set forth, true to actual experience, whether we regard the growth and development of this life in the collective body of Christ’s disciples, or view it as it unfolds in the case of a single individual. It is the same life; and *he that hath the life* knows the truthfulness of the record.

There is in all this wonderful and deep significance of the Word, an evidence that appeals direct to the heart of the one who can appreciate it, and leaves nothing more to be desired. Though it would not weigh a straw as proof to the mind of “the animal man,” yet to “him that is spiritual” it is perfectly satisfactory and decisive. It is not critical evidence, nor historical, nor corroborative, like the alleged fulfilment of a prophecy; nor, indeed, is it any evidence at all that can be weighed and measured and estimated by mere human reason; and yet it is in the highest degree satisfactory to him that hath the life.

It seems to me, indeed, that this is the *only* decisive proof of the essential truthfulness of the Written Word. Its divinity cannot be unquestionably established in any other way. There is no critical or historical argument for the genuineness and authenticity of the Bible that can be advanced that has not its weak points; these will invariably be discovered,

and a counter-argument be built up thereon, so that still the question will be somewhat in doubt. But the evidence that comes from the correspondence of the *spirit* of the Word to “the *life* of God” in the human soul, is perfectly decisive, and, to the one who is able to receive it, is absolutely convincing. I will illustrate :

Years ago, a wealthy young man went to sea as a common sailor. He was a college graduate, educated for the legal profession (which he afterwards practised) ; nevertheless, he shipped as a common sailor on board of a vessel that was to sail round Cape Horn on a trading cruise to the Pacific coast of South America, Mexico, and California. He was a very capable young man, entered into the sailor’s life with all his heart, became a thorough seaman, wrote an exceedingly interesting book entitled “Two Years Before the Mast,” also a complete manual of practical seamanship, which to this day is an acknowledged authority in all matters pertaining to the sailor’s profession. Now, suppose a practical sailor should read either one of these books for the first time, not knowing by whom it was written, or when, or how, or anything concerning it. Nevertheless, he would say at once, “The one that wrote that book was a thorough seaman, and the book is essentially true.” Suppose some one should say to him : “No one knows who wrote that book or when it was written. Some think that parts of it were not written by the author claimed, but were interpolated by someone else,” and so he should go on after the

same manner criticizing and objecting to the book. The other would reply: "I care not whether it is known who wrote the book or not, or when it was written, or whether it was all written by the same author or at the same time; I *know* the book is true, for I am a sailor myself, and that book exactly describes a sailor's life." Such a testimony to the truthfulness of the book would settle the question at once for all who knew the life set forth.

So with the Bible. It embodies a life; it hath a spirit; it breathes and moves before us. It suffers, and enjoys, and weeps, and sings, and hopes, and fears, and longs with "the man of God." Yea, it *grows* with him; it develops, and expands, and deepens, and broadens with him; it is ever beyond him; there is always more to be got out of it; it is never exhausted; the same book, the same chapter, the same verse, the same word is manifold-faced, like a diamond, and flashes light from every face as it is turned again and again; and ever does its light increase, more and more, until the perfect day. God has written his book and preserved it for his sons and daughters, who have been begotten, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, and his seed remaineth in them, and they know of the doctrine. *They* will recognize the life in the book because they possess the same; and the book to them is Father's book, because it bears unmistakably the family imprint. Therefore I believe the Bible is the Word of God.

We wish now to offer some suggestions on

BIBLE INTERPRETATION.

The following rules have been a great help to me in my Bible study, and I am very sure that they will be a help to any one in their effort to understand "the best of books":

1. Study the Bible as a whole on any particular point. Take into consideration all the evidence. There are thousands of varying sects and denominations, all claiming to base their faith on the Bible, and yet in many cases as opposite to one another as black is to white. We have already referred to this deplorable condition of things as weakening and almost nullifying the influence of the church. It also reflects discredit upon the Bible itself, making it appear to be contradictory and inconsistent, and giving rise to the very prevalent idea that you can prove anything from this much-abused book.

A wordy skeptical writer has put this popular conception as follows: "Nothing is plainer in the Bible than that there is nothing plain in the book. There is not a heresy, theory, dogma, creed, proposition, or tenet, however monstrous, however cruel, however pernicious, however childish, silly, and absurd, that may not be substantiated or refuted, driven home or kicked out of doors, by reference to that marvellous compilation, the Bible." No one can deny that there is good reason for this representation. When we see Christendom split up into such a vast number of sects and denominations, and these sub-

divided into minor cliques and clans of various shades of religious belief, almost *ad infinitum*, and almost every individual member of these numberless religious parties holding different and opposite doctrines — and yet every one of them claiming to rest upon a Bible foundation — every one of them claiming to prove their peculiar views from the scriptures — I say, when the great body of nominal Christians throughout the world presents such a spectacle of Biblical incoherence and discord as this, is it any wonder that the honest seeker after truth is perfectly bewildered and discouraged, while the caviller and the skeptic flippantly dispose of the whole matter as above? The trouble is that the Bible as a whole is not considered at all; certain parts of it are relied upon to prove a certain doctrine; set phrases, special proof texts, isolated, disconnected passages are brought into line to establish each tenet; while the rest of the scriptures are severely let alone: in fact, there are large portions of the Bible that are never studied at all, rather, I should say, never read; and of these portions the great mass of the people, including preachers and prominent teachers even, are profoundly ignorant. This is the way that almost any doctrine can be proved from the Bible: but in no such way shall we be able to arrive at the truth, *i.e.* the full, symmetrical, and harmonious truth. Suppose, for example, that one who reads this present volume is more or less interested. It seems grand and blessed and like the truth; and yet he is fearful that he may be led into error, and wishes to be sure

before he commits himself to any new doctrine. Now what shall he do? Let him "search the scriptures" thoroughly, from beginning to end, to see if they are in harmony with these views; use all the helps he can obtain, and compare one part with another. In giving this advice, the writer speaks from experience; when he first came to a knowledge of the glorious truths set forth in the "plan of the ages," he felt, as indicated above, cautious and somewhat fearful, and yet rejoicing in what seemed to be most grand and soul-inspiring truth. But before he would commit himself to it openly, he began to read the Bible *through* to see if the views harmonized therewith as a whole; although he was already very familiar with the holy scriptures, and had made it a special study for many years, yet in the light of the new-found truths the Bible seemed a new book, and as he read, and studied, and pondered, the conviction grew stronger and stronger that he was on the track of blessed and most important truth. Such an experience is eminently satisfactory and reassuring; no sincere lover of the truth can engage in such a study without being greatly blessed, and well repaid by the broader and deeper insight into the ways of God that will be obtained thereby; and in no other way can we hope to arrive at the truth; if we are not willing to take this trouble, — to pay this price, or indeed, any price for the truth, we are not worthy of it.

We might represent the Bible with its manifold, multitudinous, and yet perfectly harmonious truths as a wonderful and beautiful mosaic. The many

truths are the pieces of various material, "gold, silver, and precious stones," of various shapes and colors; and yet there is one grand and perfect pattern that these brilliant fragments will make if properly put together. In this perfect pattern a place will be found into which each piece will perfectly fit, and when the pattern is complete it will be found that there are no pieces left out, but that it has required every piece, the smallest and the most unlikely, to complete the perfect figure. Now the various sects are like persons who have got hold of a few pieces of this wonderful mosaic, and out of those pieces have constructed a sort of a figure possessing some degree of beauty; for each piece alone, each isolated truth, is beautiful in itself, and thrown together almost anyhow the whole would be more or less beautiful. But these sects have found it impossible to make their pieces form the figure that they had determined upon, hence they have manufactured pieces of various material ("wood, hay, and stubble"), to *fit* the predetermined pattern; and multitudes of other genuine pieces that they could not work into their pattern they have left lying about, utterly ignored and neglected; these odd pieces — "stones of stumbling and rocks of offence," — have become after a while so covered up with the dust and debris of the creed-makers as to be almost out of sight, and thus many of the grandest truths of God (like "the restitution of all things," for instance, Acts iii. 21) have been entirely overlooked, and to a great extent forgotten; while each sect is busy

making its own little pattern, using some of God's truths and some of their own notions — oftentimes more of the latter than of the former, — and each one claiming that its production is the genuine, originally intended figure. But the very fact that there are so many different and opposing figures is evidence of something radically wrong in them all; and the only way that we could be approximately sure of the true pattern would be by seeking one that would have a place for all the original parts.

There must be some way to thus harmonize the scriptures as a whole. If the Bible is true, if it is of divine authority, if it is in any real sense the Word of God, it must be harmonious throughout; one part must be in accord with another: and any system of theology that does not manifest and emphasize this *harmony* of God's Word, dishonors that Word and cannot be true; whereas, on the other hand, a system that rested on the entire body of scripture, that harmonized the whole, that had a place for every text and doctrine, a place into which every part of scripture fell naturally and without forcing, — such a system would be a novelty in the religious world, and would be deserving at least of careful consideration and study. To the writer, the system of Bible truth presented in the present volume almost, if not quite, measures up to the above description. It harmonizes the Bible *as a whole*, and upon this fact is based its strongest claims upon our confidence.

2. The next rule of Bible interpretation is expressed in 2 Tim. ii. 15 — “Rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Truth out of place becomes falsehood ; instead of upbuilding it is misleading. In the Bible the gradual unfolding of truth is dispensational ; portions of it belong to the Jewish age, some to the gospel dispensation, and some to the future millennial era. But many Christians, preachers, and teachers quote the Bible indiscriminately, Old or New Testament, any part of it, as though it all applied now, or to any other period they wish, and to whomsoever they may please to apply it, without the slightest regard to the connection. A little thought must convince one that such a use of scripture is very faulty, and liable to lead into the gravest errors. For instance, if any one should quote commands from the Levitical law (say, for instance, to keep the Passover) to a Christian, he would reply : “ Why, that does not apply to me ; that belongs to the Jewish dispensation, and was binding upon God’s people at that time ; but a Christian is under no such command.” The propriety of this position would at once be recognized by the great mass of Christians ; this would be rightly dividing the Word — putting the truth where it belonged — applying it scripturally ; and yet as plain and obvious as this rule is, it is often grossly violated. For example, ministers and others will often quote Isa. xxxv. 8 — “ An highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness ; the unclean shall not pass over it ; but it shall be for those [a special class] : the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein ” — applying this passage to the present time, in order to show how plain and easy the way of holi-

ness is; an *highway*, broad and plain, so that the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. But this passage does not apply to the present age, nor in any such way as the foregoing: *now* "straight is the gate and narrow is the way and *few* there be that find it"; it is "through much tribulation that we enter into the kingdom of heaven," and even the righteous "*scarcely* are saved." The way of holiness is not plain and easy *now*; it *will* be in the "ages to come," when "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the water covers the sea, and all shall know him from the least to the greatest"; then an highway shall be *there*, and the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein: but this scripture does not apply now, and one need only to read the whole chapter to be thoroughly convinced of that fact.

Take another illustration. I have often heard Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27 quoted (especially by so-called "holiness people"), in order to show what the believer's privilege is in the present dispensation; he may be cleansed from all his filthiness, have a new heart, and the Lord's spirit, and infallibly walk in his statutes and judgments; now without stopping here to consider the doctrinal point, I would protest against the use of this particular scripture to prove any such position; the one who so uses it grossly violates the rule we are considering; look at the passage and consider the adverb of time by which it is introduced — "*Then* will I sprinkle clean water upon you," etc. When? Is it not worth while to pay some attention to the specified *time* when this scrip-

ture applies? Read the context and see if the present age is indicated as the time when this scripture will be fulfilled; certainly no such condition of things as is described in this chapter has yet obtained during the present dispensation, so that at least the fulfilment of this scripture is in the future. Is it rightly *dividing* the Word to utterly ignore such plain indications of time and place, as herein noted? In the same way consider the parable of the ten virgins in Matt. xxv. 1-13: in the first place, think of the common use and application made of this parable by religious writers and speakers, and then consider that a particular time is indicated as to when it will be fulfilled — “*Then* shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins.” He who would rightly divide the Word will endeavor to fix the particular time when it applies, and not apply it anywhere and anyhow as is usually done. A knowledge of the *worlds* and *ages*, and of God’s “*plan* of the ages,” is needful in order that we may understand these time references: these subjects will be considered in their proper connection. I have perhaps said enough at present to indicate the importance of this rule.

3. The most important principle of Bible interpretation is that which was indicated by the Saviour when he said, “The words that I speak unto you, they are *spirit* and they are life.” Says the apostle, “The letter killeth, the *spirit* giveth life.” We have an illustration of this latter statement in the context to the words of Christ just quoted (John vi.), Christ had been telling the people some very strange things,

among the rest that the bread of life was his *flesh*, which he would give for the life of the world; then he tells them that except they *eat* his flesh and *drink* his blood they have no life in them. Many of his hearers thought these things were “hard sayings,” and no wonder, and they turned away from him; whereupon, Jesus asks his disciples: “Does this offend you? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” These words gave the disciples a warning that they must look for Christ’s meaning beneath the letter, and they well needed the warning, for truly his words were very bewildering; for first he tells them that his flesh is the bread of life, which he will give for the life of the world, and that they must eat his flesh and drink his blood or have no life in them; and then he declares that *the flesh profiteth nothing*; this seems like a flat contradiction; no wonder they thought it a “hard saying”; but the secret of it all is that there is a spirit to this Word, a hidden meaning, a mystic sense; if we see only the letter, *i.e.* what Jesus *said*, we shall not understand him at all; but if we see the spirit of his work, *i.e.* what he *meant*, then we shall understand him, and his Word will be life unto us. The mass of his hearers failed to catch this spirit of Christ’s words, hence those words were unto them a stumbling-stone and rock of offence, and a “savor of death unto death”; seeing only the letter, it was death unto them, for it drove them away from him who alone is the world’s life.

This principle of the spirit of the Word, or a mystic sense of scripture, I consider to be of the highest importance; it is the key that unlocks the great storehouse of God's revealed truth and fully reconciles its apparent incongruities and contradictions. By a mystic sense to scripture I do not mean a fanciful, cabalistic interpretation of every word and letter; I mean simply the scriptural interpretation of types, parables, allegories, symbols, etc. In plain language, I understand the spirit of the Word to be simply the *meaning* of it—its real true meaning, hidden under parable and dark saying, type, shadow, pattern, symbol, figure, and allegory—in contradistinction to the surface-meaning or the letter.

It is a common idea among Christians that the Bible is a very plain and simple book; so plain and easy of comprehension that (as it is often quoted) he who runs may read; the idea is about as correct as the quotation; the truth is just the opposite of this idea, and so this quotation should be just the opposite way about, "he who reads may run," or more exactly, "that he may run that readeth it" (Hab. ii. 2). Every student of the Bible knows that it abounds with parables, types, and allegories, with apparent contradictions and discrepancies, with "mysteries," "hidden wisdom," and "dark sayings," so that in order to understand "the deep things of God" contained therein, one must "search as for hid treasure"; and even then he will not find, unless it is *given* to him to know these mysteries (Matt. xiii. 11). I do not say, by any means, that there is not a

surface-meaning, a plain and obvious sense to scripture, that even a "babe in Christ" may quickly comprehend and assimilate to his spiritual nourishment; that is "the sincere milk of the Word" which "new-born babes" are to desire, and upon which they are to grow. "But strong meat ["the *mysteries* of the kingdom"] belongeth to them that are of full age, even them who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. v. 12-14).

In further illustration of this principle we will study two or three scriptural examples. See the Old-Testament story of Abraham and his two wives, the bondwoman, and the freewoman, and the two "seeds," Ishmael and Isaac. Reading the account in the Old Testament, we should have no reason to suppose that it was anything more than a bit of ancient history, illustrating the customs of those times and the character of the old patriarch; but Paul, in the fourth chapter of Galatians, gives us the *spirit* of this story; he tells us that these two women represent the two covenants, one gendering to bondage and the other representing the *free* Jerusalem, which is "above," and "the mother of us all"; for "as we have borne the image of the earthly so shall we bear the image of the heavenly." Thus Paul gives us the true meaning or spirit of the Old-Testament story; he tells us that the story is an "*allegory*"; this word exactly expresses the idea of the *spirit* of the word, for it means in the original as well as in the English (the English is only the Greek word

anglicized) *having another meaning*. The noun comes from a verb that means *to speak so as to imply something other than what is said*. The use of this word is very significant; it exactly expresses the difference between the letter and the spirit; the letter is what the Bible *says*; the spirit is what it *means*. There is a hidden meaning in scripture, a "mystic sense"; it means "something other than what is said." This is plainly implied in the use of this word "allegory."

It may appear to some as rather dangerous doctrine to teach that the scriptures do not mean what they say; this idea may seem to throw discredit upon the Word, and to open the flood-gates to conjecture, speculation, and fancy. These considerations, however, do not disturb the writer of these pages, and for two reasons. First, there is a great mass of scriptural testimony, overwhelmingly convincing, to the effect that the Bible *does* have such a mystic sense—a spirit, a hidden meaning; this point we think we have abundantly substantiated in the following pages. The second reason is that the power to recognize and appreciate this peculiarity of the Bible is a special gift from God; hence it is not *proof* of the fact that is needed in order to convince one that it *is* a fact, but *eyes to see*. This point is fully established by reference to the second chapter of First Corinthians. Read the whole chapter, and see how plainly the apostle makes this out. He says: "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect [*i.e. mature*]: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to naught:

but we speak the wisdom of God *in a mystery*, even the *hidden* wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory [mark this statement]. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man [*i.e.*, the *animal* man, verse 14], the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit: for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the holy spirit teacheth, interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual discerneth all things, yet he himself is discerned of no man."

The above scripture is very full and plain upon this subject. The apostle tells us that there is a wisdom — the hidden wisdom of God — that the great and high of this world know nothing about; and though the mere animal man hath not seen or heard, neither can he form any conception of the things that God hath promised to them that love him, yet these very things, even the deep things of

God, are revealed unto the spiritual by his spirit; thus, having received the spirit of God, we thereby know the things that are freely given us of him; which things also we speak, in the words that the holy spirit teacheth, interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men; that this is the true meaning of the last clause of this verse (13th) is plain from the change in the gender of the two words rendered "spiritual"; the first "spiritual" is neuter gender, the second one is masculine, thus plainly indicating the meaning as rendered in the margin of the new version, and setting forth the truth that spiritual things can only be understood by those "that are spiritual," *i.e.* those that have the spirit, or spiritual discernment; for the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; he not only cannot understand them, but they seem foolishness to him; he cannot know them, because he has no spiritual discernment, just as a blind man cannot see, simply because he is destitute of the sense of sight. But he that is spiritual discerns (understands; compare 1 John ii. 20) all things; but he himself is discerned (understood) by no one. Here is the whole great truth that no one can understand the deep things of God without spiritual discernment; it is a sixth sense, the spiritual sense; and it would be just as useless to try and make any one understand spiritual things without the spiritual sense, as it would be to attempt to make a person see who had not the sense of sight. You can only interpret spiritual things to spiritual men. This spiritual

sense is the gift of God; it is the wisdom that the holy spirit teacheth, that thereby we might know the things that are freely *given* to us of God. Jesus makes this thought still more positive in his statement to his disciples recorded in Matt. xiii. 11. "It is *given* unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given"; language could not be plainer; there is a mystic sense to scripture, a hidden wisdom; and to some it is given to understand it, and to some it is not given; the reason for this we shall learn when we come to consider "the plan of the ages"; the fact surely is plain from the scripture quoted.

Another very singular illustration may be found in connection with the same allegory that we have been considering. In the last verse of Gal. iv. the apostle says: "Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." Where is this "scripture?" Why, this is the petulant and apparently cruel speech of Sarah to her husband, Abraham, in regard to the bondwoman Hagar. Who would have supposed that there was a spirit even to this harsh and offensive utterance? and yet there was, as Paul shows us. This was a type, like the whole history of the children of Israel. (Compare 1 Cor. x. 6, 11.) Sarah casting out the bondwoman and her son ("born after the *flesh*") typifies the casting out of the flesh, the crucifying of the flesh, with its affections and lusts, the putting off of the old man, that the new

man ("born after the spirit") might have no rival in the "purchased possession." In view of this illustration, so strange and unexpected, one might well join in the sentiment of a certain religious writer upon this same subject of the spiritual sense of scripture, to the effect that while he would not say that every passage of scripture, and every sentence, had a mystic sense, yet he would not dare to put his finger upon any one word of holy writ and say, "This has *not* a mystic sense." Surely "the manifold wisdom of God" and "the unsearchable riches of Christ are strangely bound up and hidden away in the narrative, history, poetry, and prophecy of the Written Word, just as all "the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" were hid in the Word Incarnate, and only he can unlock these treasures to whom it is *given*.

CHAPTER II.

“ALL THINGS ARE OF GOD.”

THERE is no statement in the Bible that is more remarkable and even startling than this — “All things are of God” (2 Cor. v. 18). When you think of it seriously it seems as though Paul was rather unguarded and careless in his language; it would seem as though he ought to have modified and limited his statement somewhat, say, for instance, all *good* things are of God. But no, the apostle makes the sweeping, unqualified statement — “All things are of [literally, *out of*] God”; and so important did he consider this great truth that he repeats it no less than *seven* distinct times. (See Rom. xi. 36; 1 Cor. viii. 6; xi. 12; 2 Cor. v. 18; Eph. i. 11; iv. 6; Heb. ii. 10.)¹ Now was the apostle careless and a little too bold in these utterances, or did he mean just what he said, and are they true absolutely? I say unhesitatingly *yes* to the two latter questions. The more we learn of God’s works and ways, the more we shall understand that in a sense absolutely *all* things are of God, or, as some put it, God is in everything. This is the doctrine of God’s universal, all-pervading, ever-con-

¹ Christ confirms these statements in John xvii. 7, compared with Matt. xi. 27.

stant providence. "His tender mercies are over all his works." "He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

This doctrine of God's providence is a most positive and important one; there is no doctrine of scripture that is more plainly supported by the most emphatic statements repeated over and over again, as referred to above; and no Christian would think of doubting it, were it not for the fact that its full acceptance leads to some very startling and, to some, even shocking conclusions. "What!" they say, "all things are of God? absolutely *all* things? the bad things as well as the good? all the crime, and sin, and wickedness? surely it is blasphemous to say that such things are of God. Paul never could have meant that we should take him absolutely; we must use our own judgment and reason in such matters, and correct these sweeping statements, for it *cannot* mean that absolutely *all* things are of God." And yet that is the way the apostle puts it, over and over again. Was he ignorant and careless? No, he was neither; he was *right*, and the scriptures, and experience and observation fully bear him out in his statements, as strange and startling as they may seem. Let us look at this subject carefully, and see if it is not literally true that all things are of God.

We will notice some general statements of scripture first. Says Christ, "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not one of them is forgotten before God." Just ponder this statement a moment — not one of them is forgotten before God; and of

course it is not sparrows alone that God cares for, but all his creatures; not one of them is forgotten; and the Saviour adds, "The very hairs of your head are numbered." This is not mere hyperbole, but it represents a literal fact; not that one's hairs are literally counted; I do not know of any advantage that would be, but it means that God's providence is over his creatures to such an extent, in its minuteness and particularity, as almost to seem absurd. The great men of the earth manifest their greatness by their close attention to so-called great things; the affairs of state, national interests, business ventures involving millions, vast philanthropic schemes, and such like matters of world-wide importance; these men generally have very little care and pay very little attention to the common every-day affairs of life. But God, between whom and the greatest of all earth's great ones there is an infinite disparity, displays *his* greatness by caring for what would seem to be the most trivial interests of his creatures, like the numbering of the hairs of their heads, and taking notice of apparently the most unimportant events, like the falling of a single sparrow. Well may we exclaim with Faber in view of *such* greatness, —

"O God! thy *loving* greatness ever lies
Outside us like a boundless sea;
We cannot lose ourselves where all is home,
Nor drift away from thee.
Thus doth thy grandeur make us grand ourselves;
Thy goodness quells our fear;
Thy greatness makes us brave as children are
When those they love are near."

If you would see this thought of God's universal providence carried out in every detail read the four consecutive Psalms, beginning with the 104th. These four Psalms contain this doctrine in all its fulness. Read also Psalm 147th and especially the 139th. This latter Psalm is a perfect gem of providence—a marvellous setting forth of the minuteness of God's care.

Most Christians will accept the above (theoretically at least), but what will stagger them is the idea of evil things being “of God.” They are very willing to acknowledge that all good things are of God, but bad things are of the devil, or of wicked men; and thus they divide God's universe into two realms, the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness, and place rival gods over each; this is practically the faith of the greater part of Christians; and yet this idea is chaotic and antichristian, and tends directly to atheism, as I think I shall show before we get through this chapter. Paul says “*All things are of God.*” “*He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*” All things include evil things, and we shall find that these are of God, as well as those things that we call good.

Take the case of Joseph as an illustration of how evil things are of God. His unnatural brethren determined to kill him (Gen. xxxvii.). Being dissuaded from this they sell him to the Ishmaelites, thus bringing upon him a cruel servitude, and upon their aged father a heart-breaking agony. A blacker or more wicked deed could scarcely be imagined;

and yet in the sequel of the story, when Joseph is made ruler of Egypt, and his brethren coming down to buy corn at last discover that he is their long-lost brother, whom they had so cruelly wronged, he reassures and comforts them by saying: "Now therefore, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither, for *God did send me* before you to preserve life. *So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God.*" Could we have a more striking and positive illustration of how "all things are of God"? He is in everything, even in the crimes and cruelties of man. Take another illustration not so prominent in the Bible, but just as positive. (See Judges xiv. 1-4.) Samson becomes enamored of a Philistine woman and must have her for his wife. In vain his parents try to dissuade him from so improper an alliance as it would seem; Samson is completely bewitched and insists upon having her. Who would suppose that God had anything particular to do with this apparently foolish love affair? and yet it was *of* him. For the fourth verse reads, "But his father and his mother knew not that it was *of the Lord*, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines." (For another illustration see 2 Chron. x. 15; xi. 4.)

Another very striking example of how evil things are of God, is brought out in the case of the priestly house of Eli. (Read 1 Sam. ii. 25, 30-33.) Now see how the fulfilment of this prediction was brought about in 1 Sam. xxii. 18-20. A more cold-blooded, barbarous butchery was never perpetrated, and yet

it was the carrying out of the purpose of God. In 1 Sam. ii. 31, God says, "*I* will cut off thy father's house." According to the account in chapter twenty-two it was Doeg that did the awful deed, and yet it is plain to see how God was in it. Abiathar escaped the massacre; the denunciation was against the entire house of Eli. Abiathar must be banished from the priesthood. See how it was done in 1 Kings ii. 26, 27. "So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the Lord; to fulfil the word of the Lord which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh." Is not this a very plain illustration of the great truth we are considering? The awful deeds of wicked men are "of God" in such a sense that he makes them conducive to the carrying out of his own plans, and brings good out of them in the end. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise him; the remainder of wrath [that which he cannot turn to his praise] will he restrain." "All are his servants" (Psa. cxix. 91). "Fire and hail, snow and vapor, and stormy wind fulfil his word" (Psa. cxlviii. 8).

The heathen king Cyrus is another illustration of this truth. (See Isa. xlv. 1-7.) Cyrus was God's "annointed" to do his work. God used him as an instrument to accomplish a certain purpose, though Cyrus knew not that he was thus being used of God. The case of the Assyrians is still more marked. God was using them just as the carpenter uses his tools. (See Isa. x. 1-19, especially verse 15; and in the same connection see Jer. li. 19-24.)

Again, see Josh. xi. 15-20. Israel destroyed the

Canaanites, and made peace with none of them except the Gibeonites, "For it was *of the Lord* to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle that *he* might destroy them utterly." See, also, a very remarkable illustration in Psa. cv. 25. God sent his people down into Egypt, having sent Joseph before them (verse 17; this verse confirms Joseph's own statement that God, and not his wicked brethren, sent him) to prepare the way for them. God increased his people and made them stronger than their enemies (verse 24), and now mark: "He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal deceitfully with his servants." What! did God incline the hearts of the Egyptians to hate his own people, to deal deceitfully with his own servants? So the record reads; and this record is confirmed by the declarative question of the prophet in Isa. xlii. 24: "Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord?" Truly, all things are of God.

Take still another illustration from the New Testament. The crucifixion of Christ is always looked upon as the most awful crime that ever was committed, and the perpetrators of it are considered as deserving the most severe retribution; and yet they simply did what God's hand and counsel determined before to be done (Acts iv. 28), and Peter tells us that Christ was "delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." Look also at Rev. xvii. 17, and see how wicked nations do God's will. Thus we see that even this stupendous

crime was "of God," and since we know that he "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," we can readily see from the illustrations cited how true it is that "all things are of God," even all evil things.

The Bible is full of this doctrine; any one who will read the book with this thought in mind will be surprised and startled by the frequency and distinctness with which this doctrine is brought out. For example, did the reader ever notice in reading the prophets the use of the first personal pronoun *I*, used in reference to God? Jehovah says, by the mouth of his prophets, *I* have done so and so, and thus and thus, when those very things, according to the history, seem to have been the sole work of wicked and godless men, and yet the Lord says, *I* did it. If the reader has not thought of this before, let him take his Bible and begin with the fortieth chapter of Isaiah and read through the forty-eighth, especially noticing the first personal pronoun referring to God, that thus he may know what God doeth; and let him mark the culmination of these startling scriptures in chapter forty-five, seventh verse: "*I* form the light, and create darkness; *I* make peace and create evil; *I*, the Lord, do all these things." We shall consider this scripture again further on; *I* refer to it now simply to show the responsibility that God takes upon himself. Puny theologians need no longer discuss the "origin of evil," or try to show by wordy and obscure argument, how a perfectly pure and sinless creature, with not a particle of evil in all

God's universe, might yet become intensely evil, and God not be in any degree responsible therefor. If we would accept the Word of God, all this vain talk would be silenced; for thus saith Jehovah: "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" "*I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things.*" Let us accept the word, strange and startling though it be, and let us endeavor, not to find some other explanation of the *fact* of evil, but to learn, if we may, the *purpose* of that fact.

In the present chapter we will content ourselves with simply making out this one point, that all things are of God; or rather we would call the attention of the reader to how the Bible sets forth this great truth of God's universal providence. We have presented sufficient scripture to fully prove that God's providence (which is only another name for God himself) is omnipresent and all-pervading; that absolutely *nothing* takes place but God's hand is in it, controlling, directing, overruling, so that his own will is accomplished. "He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." We shall elaborate this thought more and more as we proceed; but I would have the reader here at the outset be thoroughly convinced of its truth; and do not let any thought of the consequences of such a belief shake your faith; do not say to yourself: "Why, it cannot be! God absolutely in *all* things? Impossible! Do you tell me that God is in all the wickedness, and wrong, and outrage, and injustice, and cruelty, and crime? that

all these things are in any sense ‘of God’? Such a thought were blasphemy. I cannot believe it.” But what then will you do with the scripture quoted above? what will you do with the Bible illustrations given of how God is in evil things? and, furthermore, what will you do with evil itself? that great, black, towering burden laid on to humanity, and cursing God’s fair creation? I do not speak of its origin, but of the fact of its existence. Will you make it an entity distinct from and independent of God? You must do this, or else you must make God its master; and if he is its master, then of course he controls and directs it and makes it subservient to his own ends. Consider for a moment the consequences of the opposite view. If God is *not* in all things — if he does *not* work all things after the counsel of his own will — if all things are *not* of God — if some things take place in which he has no hand, over which he has no controlling power — entirely independent of him, unknown to him or beyond his reach, then what a chaos of uncertainty is opened before us! What dreadful things of this kind *have* happened in the past! What awful things *may* happen in the time to come! If there is a power of evil that can act independent of God, in spite of him, or unknown to him, then this power, call it what you please, is a rival god, and it may entirely upset God’s government sometime; how could we be sure that it would not? According to the popular belief this evil power has already done that very thing. God made all things “very good” in the beginning, and this evil power

steps in and makes almost everything very bad; and the "plan of redemption," as it is usually called, is a "scheme" to repair damages; if such a calamity has occurred once, *contrary to God's will*, how can we be sure that it will not occur again? Furthermore, how can we be resigned to the ills and woes of life if all things are not of God? Surely there is no virtue in being patient under trials that are entirely the work of the devil, and in which God has no part or share whatever. But if, on the other hand, God *is* in all things, if nothing happens except by his appointment or permission, then we may well be resigned, for we may be sure that he will allow nothing to take place that he cannot in the end somehow overrule for good. "He causes the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder he restrains." Paul tells us in Rom. viii. 20, that it was God himself that made the creation subject to vanity, this fallen state; that is to say, the so-called "fall of man" was "of God"; and we have a perfect illustration of how God permits evil (and is, therefore, in some sense responsible for it) in the case of Job; it is worthy of note in the case of the old patriarch, that although Satan was the immediate agent of his afflictions and dreadful calamities, yet he is never recognized as such at all; but Job attributes all his troubles to God, saying, "Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord and shall we not receive evil?" The evil as well as the good was "at the hand of the Lord." Was Job guilty of blasphemy in thus ascribing evil to God? Certainly not; God is the creator of evil, and it is

his servant, as are all things, and his will is accomplished thereby in the end, for "His kingdom ruleth over all." The prophet Amos implies even a more startling statement than the utterance of Job, when he asks, "Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?"

We shall notice again all these scriptures in regard to this intensely interesting subject of the problem of evil: I refer briefly to them now in order that the reader may be fully established in the truth that all things are of God, the evil things as well as the good. Thus we may know that God is supreme; "He worketh all things after the counsel of his *own* will." He is absolutely the first great cause; absolutely all things are of him; we may abide under the shadow of that great truth in perfect safety; let nothing cheat us out of it; do not exalt the devil so high, or wicked men, or any evil power, as to suppose that either one, or all of them combined, can act independent of God. What force would there have been in Job's utterance had he said, "Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil at the hand of the devil?" There would be no reason why we should receive evil at the hand of the devil without murmur or complaint, simply because we receive good from the hand of God; but if both are of God, then we may be resigned to both, since we are sure that he would permit nothing that is not right and good in the end.

Let the trusting child of God then take this great truth home to his heart — "All things are of God";

this is for his comfort and support amid all the changes and vicissitudes of life. My God and my Father is in all things. I am content, let come what will. "For *of* Him [as the source], and *through* Him [as the means], and *to* Him [as the end] are all things: to whom be glory for the ages. Amen" (Rom. xi. 36).

CHAPTER III.

THE WORLDS AND THE AGES.

IN the last chapter we have learned that God is the great architect of the universe. He buildeth, and none can hinder; neither has any other being the power to lay one stone upon another without his high behest. "The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: for the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" (Isa. xiv. 24-27). "The Most High liveth forever; whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?" (Dan. iv. 34, 35). That is to say, "He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

Thus we see that God takes the whole responsibility. "It is God that worketh in you both to *will* and to *do*, of his good pleasure." We must first look at this question of Bible harmony from God's standpoint; the great question is, "What has

God wrought?" After we have learned something on this side of the question we will turn to man's side and consider that other important but subordinate question, "What is man?"

In the present chapter we are to consider the framework of the worlds and the ages, upon which God lays out his bright designs and works his sovereign will.

THE WORLDS.

We find in the scripture that time, as it relates to this world, is divided up into worlds and ages; a world is the longer period and may include several ages; and each world includes a distinct *heaven* and *earth*, which terms are used figuratively, referring respectively to the ruling element and the subjects ruled over in any particular world. In the third chapter of the second epistle of Peter three such worlds are set forth, and each world is composed of a distinct heaven and earth. Let us study the meaning of these terms. Of course we all know the ordinary meaning of the words world, heaven, and earth; but are these words used here in their ordinary sense? I think that a careful reading of the whole chapter, both in the old and new version, text and margin, will at least suggest the thought that there is a meaning to this chapter that does not appear upon the surface, especially so when we read in the latter part of the chapter Peter's reference to the writings of "our beloved brother Paul" upon the same subjects; in which writings Peter says there

are "some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

Here certainly is more than a hint that in the writings on "these things" there are "some things hard to be understood," requiring *learning* to fathom and comprehend; not book learning, "not the wisdom of this world," but the wisdom "which the holy spirit teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual." We therefore expect to find a deeper significance to this scripture than appears on the surface. If the terms were to be taken in their most obvious and ordinary sense, there would be nothing hard to be understood by any person, learned or unlearned. But we are to be on our guard here lest we wrest this scripture to our own destruction. Let us seek, then, for the meaning as men seek for hid treasure.

In verses five and six the apostle first speaks of the world that was before the flood as consisting of a heavens and earth, and he tells us that *that* world, "being overflowed with water, perished." The original word rendered *world* is *cosmos*, a word that has been incorporated into the English language and that may be found in any English dictionary; there need be no mystery, therefore, about this word. It will be found that it means order, harmony, arrangement, and is opposed to the word *chaos*, which means without order, harmony, or system; the word *cosmos* means about the same as the French word *regime*, which may also be found in our English dictionaries

as indicating a mode, style, system, administration, a certain arrangement or order of things,—this is a cosmos or world.

In the Bible we find the word frequently used in this sense. For example, Christ says to the Jews, “Ye are of this world; I am not of this world”; that is to say, Ye are of this system, this order of things; I am of an order yet to come. Satan is “the prince of this world”; it is an unrighteous, iniquitous condition of things,—“this present evil world.” On the other hand, Christ says, “My kingdom is not of this world,”—not of this order of things. So Christ says to his disciples, “Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world”; this the apostle explains in Rom. xiii. 11–14 and 1 Thess. v. 4–8. Paul also speaks of “the fashion of this world,” “the course of this world,” the “beggarly elements,” and the “rudiments” of this world. All this plainly indicates the meaning of the word as already intimated above.

We also find the word used in the sense of “mankind,” as when it says, “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world”; “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself”; “The bread of God is he who cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world.” In such passages as these it is plain to be seen that the term *world* means the race, mankind. In these two senses is the term *cosmos* used in the New Testament.

Now in this third chapter of Second Peter there are three worlds spoken of, each world consisting of a distinct heavens and earth. The heavens and earth

which were "of old standing out of the water and in the water," constituting "the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished"; this was the "old world" (2 Pet. ii. 5). Then comes "the heavens and the earth which are now" constituting "*this* world" that Christ and the apostles speak of, as noted above. "This world,"—this present iniquitous system of things of which Satan is the prince, "the ruler of the darkness of *this* world,"—this will be destroyed by fire at the "day of judgment," and will thus "pass away," and be succeeded by "a new heavens and new earth," constituting a new world, or order of things, "wherein dwelleth righteousness." This future world is the one to which Christ and his people belong, and which will witness the establishment of his kingdom, as intimated in the scripture quoted above: "I am not of this world"; "My kingdom is not of this world"; "Ye are not of this world, but I have chosen you out of the world." Then shall "the kingdom [dominion] of this world become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ" (Rev. xi. 15).

These are the three worlds of scripture. The three worlds of the popular theology are heaven, earth, and hell, but none of these are ever called a world in the Bible; the above are the only worlds spoken of, and these come in the order named. No two of them are contemporaneous, and each of them, as we have seen, is made up of a distinct heavens and earth.

In their symbolic usage a heavens and an earth refer to the ruling element and those ruled over in

any particular world, or, in other words, the government and the people. For example, the Lord says, "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool," *i.e.* heaven represents the ruling element, the throne; the earth represents the element ruled over, under subjection, the footstool. To the same effect see Dan. iv. 11, 22, 26, and Heb. vii. 26; and on the word *earth*, see Mic. i. 2 and Psa. xcvi. Says the prophet, "The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish; the earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; . . . therefore hath the curse devoured the earth," etc. (Isa. xxiv. 4-6). It will be seen in this passage that the words *earth*, *people*, and *inhabitants* are used interchangeably; this shows the figurative meaning of the word *earth*, and thus we can understand why each world is spoken of as including a heavens and an earth. Each world exhibits some particular form of rule (the heavens), and the effects of that rule on the masses (the earth). In the "old world," before the flood, "the sons of God" (Gen. vi. 2) were the ruling class, the heavens of that *cosmos*. They themselves degenerated, and under their rule "the *earth* became corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence; for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth." The *earth* and *all flesh* mean one and the same, the masses of the people ruled over, — "*that* world, being overflowed with water, perished." Each one can see that in the destruction of the "old world" it was not the material earth that perished, but mankind, together

with the system of things that then obtained. "This world" will also pass away, and be succeeded by a new world, made up of "a new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." From this latter passage especially, it can be seen that by a new heavens and earth is not meant a new planet, but a new system or order of things, as described, for example, in Psa. lxxxv. "Truth shall spring out of the *earth*, and righteousness shall look down from *heaven*; and the Lord shall give that which is good [evil will be restrained, Rev. xx. 3], and our land shall yield her increase, and righteousness shall go before him, and shall set us in the way of his steps." It is very plain that this language describes a heavens and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, and the meaning is plain. Not a material heavens and earth, not a new planet and a new atmosphere surrounding it, or a new firmament above it,—this is not what is meant,—but a new system (*all* things made new, Rev. xxi. 5) in both the ruling powers and the condition of the world, for Christ shall rule, "the Lord our Righteousness," and the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea; and every man shall sit under his own vine and fig-tree, with none to molest or make him afraid.

In the present world, from the flood to the second advent, we still have an *evil* heavens and earth; Satan is the prince of this world (John xiv. 30); under him are the "wicked spirits in the heavenlies" (Eph. vi. 12, margin); *i.e.* in the place of authority and

power (see also Eph. ii. 2; 1 Pet. v. 8); under these "rulers of darkness" are the corrupt, wicked, and godless governments of the world; so oppressive, tyrannical, and cruel that they are represented in the Bible by savage beasts (Dan. vii. 1-7). This is the present heavens. What is the present earth? What else *could* it be under *such* a heavens but just what it is, — a scene of discord, strife, misery, corruption, and death? — a chaos of disorder and ruin? "The earth mourneth and fadeth away; the world languisheth and fadeth away; the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant; therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate" (Isa. xxiv. 4-6). How fitly does this language express the state of affairs in this earth! Read the fifth chapter of the epistle of James, and see the present times described, and the remedy indicated. Notice the various counts in that awful indictment against society in these "last days." The useless hoarding up of gold and silver — "and the RUST of them shall be a witness against the rich, and shall eat their flesh as it were fire." It is not the gold and silver that shall be a witness against the rich, but the *rust* of them; *i.e.* the disuse of them; hoarding money simply for accumulation and not to use for God's glory and the good of others. Think of the millions of dollars that are lying idle in the banks to-day while millions of human beings suffer for the necessities of life.

Another count is the keeping back of "the hire of the laborers by fraud"; labor troubles are among the most serious characteristics of these troublous times. Other counts are the wanton living in pleasure, excess in every direction, injustice, and oppression; and now the apostle comes to the remedy. Thank God, there *is* a remedy! What is it? "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto" — what? Unto the time when education, art, and science shall civilize and elevate the world, and cure these evils? is that what we are to wait for? Not so speaks the apostle. Does he tell us to be patient unto the time when the nations shall reform themselves, when the relation between labor and capital shall be amicably and righteously settled by governments, legislatures, co-operative societies, or political parties? Does he tell us to wait until the church wakes up from her sleep of religious ease and worldly comfort, and in the strength of God puts down these crying evils, and establishes peace in the earth? No, he does not tell us to wait for any of these things, but — "Be patient, therefore, brethren, *unto the coming of the Lord.*" This is the great event that constitutes not only the "blessed hope" of those who "look for him" (Heb. ix. 28), but also the *only* hope of the groaning creation. Therefore, brethren, "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, unless ye be condemned; behold, the Judge standeth before the door."

God be praised for this bright promise, streaking the darkness of "this present evil world"; blessed

harbinger of the coming "perfect day"! My soul goes out in most earnest longing as I pray, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus," not only for the deliverance of thine elect, "the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb" (Rev. xiv. 4), but also, and more if anything, for the deliverance of the "whole creation"; and "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low [here's *levelling* by *Christian* communism], and the *crooked* shall be made *straight*, and the *rough* places plain, and the Glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. xl. 4, 5). Let the heavens [wicked governments] pass away with a great noise, and the elements (Gal. iv. 9) melt with fervent heat, and the earth, and the works that are therein, be *discovered* (2 Pet. iii. 10, N. V., margin; compare Luke xii. 2) and *burned up* with the "fierce fire of God's jealousy" (Zeph. i. 14-18; iii. 8, 9). "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness"; and here is the promise, "Behold I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind" (Isa. lxxv. 17). Let us notice some of the things that the Bible reveals about this new heavens and new earth. First, in regard to the new heavens, *i.e.* the new government of this new world, the new ruling class. At the head of this government will be Christ, and associated with him as kings, priests, judges, and saviours are the saints. Satan and his wicked crew are bound and shut up in the abyss, "that he should

deceive the nations no more" (Rev. xx. 1-3). Hence "the whole earth is at rest and is quiet; they break forth into singing" (Isa. xiv. 7). Under these chief rulers, Christ and the saints, will be subordinate rulers of every grade, righteous, just, and incorruptible. Read Isa. xi. and xii. for a description of that new order of things. Of the king we read that "the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of *quick* understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked; and *righteousness* shall be the girdle of his loins and *faithfulness* the girdle of his reins." Both Isaiah and John speak of the new heavens and new earth and give descriptions, the difference between them being that Isaiah describes the new earth and John describes the new heaven; that is, John describes the ruling element of the new order of things, while Isaiah describes the condition of the people under that rule.

In the last two chapters of the Revelation, John describes the new heavens under the symbol of a magnificent city, the New Jerusalem; this wonderful city, we are told, is "the Bride, the Lamb's Wife"; and the description that follows sets forth to the

utmost extent of human language the grandeur and beauty of the glorified bride, represented by this great city. The bride is made up of the overcomers, who are also the kings and priests with Christ, the King of kings and Great High Priest. The glowing description of this city indicates the excellency and perfection of that new heavens. Its jasper walls and pearly gates, its foundations of precious stones, and golden streets, are only representations faintly symbolizing the transcendent majesty of that new and perfect government. Every blessing for mankind is represented as flowing out of this grand city. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple and the light of it; "and the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it; and the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there." This is no selfish, exclusive heaven, with narrow gates all fast upon a handful of saved, and myriads of the lost eternally wailing round its outer walls; this is a great city with twelve gates, each one wide enough for a regiment to march in abreast, and *never* shut, thank God! The River of the Water of Life has its source in this city and flows through it and *out* of it to give *health* and *life* wherever it flows (compare Ezek. xlvii. 1-12); and on either side of the river was there the Tree of Life, with its monthly fruitage for *meat*, and its abundant leafage for the "healing" of the "bruises and sores" of the *nations* (Ezek. xlvii. 12, margin).

All this describes the goodness and benevolence of the new heavens, the government of the new *cosmos*; and now what will be the condition of the people, the new *earth*, under such a government? What else *could* it be but blessed and glorious? Just so sure as the present *evil* heavens produce a sin-and-sorrow-cursed earth, so that future *righteous* heavens shall produce an earth filled with the "peaceable *fruit* of righteousness."

Isaiah describes this new earth (lxv. 17-25), when there shall be no more sorrow, wrong, or injustice, but "*all* shall know the Lord," and "*all* shall be righteous" (Isa. lx. 21). "The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea"; war shall be no more; crime shall cease; "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain [kingdom]." Joy and beauty shall bud and blossom on every hand; "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God." "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree; and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb; and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall

lead them." Everything animate and inanimate is represented as being in harmony, and rejoicing in this state of things. The Psalmist exclaims, "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; fear before him, all the earth. Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth; the world [the new *cosmos*] shall be established that it shall not be moved; he shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar and the fulness thereof; let the floods clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein; then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord, *for he cometh*,—he cometh to judge the earth; he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth." If you wish to read other descriptions of this new order of things, see Psa. lxxii., xcvi., xcvi., and many others. I do not mean to be understood as saying that this perfect condition of the earth will be affected instantaneously, but this will be the ultimate result under the sway of that godlike heavens,—Christ and his saints. God speed the joyful day when "this present evil world" shall pass away, with all its sin, misery, corruption, and death, and give place to that bright era of glory and blessedness; when "Mercy and truth shall meet together, and righteousness and peace shall kiss each other"; when "Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven, and the Lord shall give that which is good, and our land shall yield her increase, and righteousness shall

go before him, and shall set *us* in the way of his steps."

The first world extended from the creation to the flood, a period of 1656 years. The second one extends from the flood to the "day of judgment," or the second coming of Christ, since he comes to judge the quick and dead (2 Tim. iv. 1). This world has already covered a period of more than four thousand years, and the great lines of prophecy as well as "the signs of the times" indicate that it has almost run its course and that the new heavens and new earth are close at hand, — "The Judge standeth at the door." The third world extends on from the second coming of Christ to "the dispensation of the fulness of times," when all things in heaven and earth shall be gathered together in Christ (Eph. i. 10); "for he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet, all rule, all authority, and all power," and has destroyed the last enemy, death, and "then cometh the end" when "God shall be all in all."

THE AGES.

We will now consider the relation of the ages to the worlds. We have seen that there are three worlds; these worlds are subdivided into ages. Of the first world we know but little; all the account of it we have is contained in a few verses at the commencement of the sixth chapter of Genesis; we know not what subdivisions that world may have been divided into. Of this present world we have

a full record, and it plainly appears that it has been divided into three ages.

1. The Patriarchal age, from the flood to the death of Jacob.

2. The Jewish age, from the death of Jacob to the first advent.

3. The Gospel age, from the first to the second advent.

The new world is divided up into many ages, — “the ages to come” — of which the millennium is a specimen; that world is “the age of ages,” as we will notice further on. It may be doubted that the ages have the above specific significance in the Bible; we use the word in a variety of ways more or less vague and indefinite; as, for example, we speak of “the middle ages” and “the dark ages,” meaning the time midway between the present and the beginning of the Christian era; we also speak of the “Elizabethan age,” “the age of Louis XIV.,” etc. It is supposed by many that this word is used in the Bible in this same loose, indefinite sort of a way. But I think that any one who will study the subject without prejudice will be speedily convinced that however indefinite we may use the word in general language, in the Bible it has a distinctive and constant meaning.

The original word is *æon*; it means a space or period of time, one’s lifetime or age, etc. The meaning of the word is confused in the common version of the New Testament by its being translated the same as *cosmos*, world; *æon* is an altogether differ-

ent word from *cosmos*, as we shall clearly show, and yet it is rendered the same, a gross and very misleading error. This error is rectified to a great extent in the margin of the new version; the text of the new version follows the old, but in the margin the correct rendering is usually given; therefore, if the reader will look out the references given on this subject in the margin of the new version, he will in most cases find the statements fully verified.

There are only two places in the common version where the word *æon* is rendered as it should be in every case, age; but these two instances are significant because they show of themselves the meaning of the word. In Col. i. 26 we read of "the mystery which hath been hid from *ages* and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints." In Eph. ii. 7 we read that "in the *ages* to come God will show the exceeding riches of his grace." These passages plainly indicate two things in regard to this word: 1. The ages are limited periods of time; several of them have run their course and come to an end in the past, and there are yet more to come. 2. "The ages to come" are to be richer in the manifestation of the grace of God than past ages; in other words, it appears that God's grace broadens and his plan develops as the ages roll; mysteries that have been hid in past ages are made known, and the future ages are to witness "the riches of his grace" to an extent "exceeding" that of any previous age. These points are clear from these two passages; but we could not determine from these whether

the ages are definite periods of time or not; to settle this point let us look at other scripture.

Heb. ix. 26. "Now once *at the end of the ages*, hath Christ been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." It appears from this passage that when Christ came to suffer and die it was at the end of a series of ages. Again, in 1 Cor. x. 11, we read, "These things were written for our admonition upon whom *the ends of the ages* have come." This peculiar expression is clear when we consider that the apostle, and they to whom he wrote, lived during the transition period between two ages: the Jewish age was coming to a close; the Gospel age was beginning: thus "the ends of the ages" had come upon them. This explanation is still further confirmed when we understand that the word here rendered "are come," means strictly are *met*; thus bringing out the idea of the meeting of the two ends of the Jewish and Gospel ages. Furthermore, it is evident from many scriptures that the time from the first to the second advent is an age (see Gal. i. 4, "this present evil age"; Tit. ii. 12, "this present age"; also 1 Cor. ii. 6-8; iii. 18; 2 Cor. iv. 4; Eph. vi. 12; 1 Tim. vi. 17; and many other passages). It will be found in all these passages that the word is rendered *world*; but by referring to the margin of the new version, the correct rendering will be found. To still further confirm this point see Matt. xxiv. 3, — "What shall be the sign of the coming and of the end of the age?" From this passage it is evident that the end of "this present evil age" is synchronous with the second

advent; and then, what? then comes eternity, most Christians think; not so, however; then comes a new world containing other ages, even "ages of ages," until "the dispensation of the fulness of times" [ages]. In proof of this see Luke xx. 34-36; "The children of this age marry and are given in marriage; but they which shall be counted worthy to obtain that age and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage," etc. This passage plainly teaches two important points: 1. At the close of this age the resurrection takes place. 2. Then comes not eternity, but another age,—"that age." Jesus is plainly talking of two ages,— "this age" and "that age"; and at the *meeting* of these two ages the resurrection is located; here the idea of the "ages to come" is clearly brought out. We will now notice some passages to show the difference between *æon* and *cosmos* (Matt. xiii. 38, 39). Here Christ explains the parable of the sower; he says, "the field is the *world*; the harvest is the end of the *world*." Reading this from the common version, most persons would suppose that the word world means the same in both places; but such is not the case; the first word is *cosmos*, the second is *æon*. How misleading to render these very different Greek words by the same English word! The field is the world [*cosmos*]; the world of mankind, where the good seed, "the children of the kingdom" or "the Word" (Mark. iv. 14) was sown; the harvest is the end of the *æon*, age; not the end of the race of mankind, or the end of this planet on which we live, or the end

of time, — but the end of the *age*, the Gospel age, when there will be a harvest, just as there was at the end of the Jewish age (Luke x. 2), preparatory to the introduction of a new age and a new world, or order of things. This is plain and simple; but the rendering of the old version makes confusion.

Again see Heb. ix. 26: the apostle says that Christ did not need to offer himself often, as the Jewish high priest made offering every year; “for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the *world*; but now once in the end of the *world* hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” Here again the first “world” is from *cosmos*, the second one is from *æon*; but both are rendered by the same word, thus again making confusion. The sense of the passage is that Christ must often have suffered since the foundation of the world; *cosmos*, the world of mankind; but now once in the end of the *age*, *i.e.* at the end of the Jewish age, Jesus appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

We will notice one more passage (Heb. i. 2). “By whom also he made the worlds.” Most readers of this passage would get the idea that by the “worlds” here is meant the material worlds, the planets and heavenly bodies, and they would understand that Jesus created the material universe. But this idea is overthrown at once when we learn that the word here properly rendered is *ages* — “By whom he made [*i.e.* constituted or arranged] the ages.” Jesus Christ is the one central figure of all the ages. Before he came he was pointed to in a hundred

ways in types, allegories, patterns, shadows, and prophecies; and when he came, he came as the fulfilment of all these; and in all future ages he will be "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for the ages." An ever-increasing, broadening, and deepening revelation of God in Christ has characterized all the ages past. From the first promise in Eden that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, Jesus was more and more revealed, age after age, until he himself came, that we might behold "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Jesus is the great revelation of God to man; hence God arranged the ages with special reference to him; that is, each succeeding age has taken its distinctive characteristic from that measure of light, progressively revealed, in regard to this image of God, the divine Word, Jesus Christ. How simple, and yet how grand and true, is the declaration — "By whom also he arranged the ages"! Take out Christ from the ages and what would be left? An empty shell, a husk, a shadow without a substance, — nothing. Jesus makes them what they are, and without him they would not be. This progressive revelation of God to man through Jesus Christ, which has given character to all the ages, is far more glorious and important than the creation of the material universe. But this important truth is entirely obscured by the misleading translation of the common version.

Thus it may be clearly seen that there is a great difference between these two words, though they are

rendered alike. A world signifies a certain order of things as it relates to the whole race of mankind; an age is a period during which God is dealing, according to a certain method, with his people only. The transition from one age to another involves a change in the mode of God's dealings with his own special people, but does not affect the race as a whole. A change from one world to another affects all mankind. The flood was the transition period from the "old world" to the present world; and the change affected every member of the race. The Patriarchal age was the first one in "this world"; in this age God's people were represented by one man at a time, — Noah, and the patriarchs following him down to Abraham; then successively by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, one at a time, until the death of Jacob; when, for the first time, "the twelve tribes of Israel" (Gen. xlix. 28) are recognized as God's people, and the Jewish age begins: this latter continued until the first advent, when the Christian era was introduced, which has run on to the present time. Now let it be noticed that these ages are not characterized in themselves, nor distinguished one from another, by anything affecting the world as a whole. God's people alone have been affected by these changes; the world has gone on through these ages, and from one to another, without even so much as knowing anything about the transition. The great epochs of the world's history by no means correspond to the changes in these ages. For instance, the kingdom of Judah continued down to 606 B.C., when a great change took

place; the crown was taken from the last Judæan king (Ezek. xxi. 25-27), and universal dominion given to the Gentiles. This was the beginning of "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke xxi. 24). But there was no change in the dispensation, *i.e.* in God's method with his people; they still continued under the same law down to the time of Christ.

On the other hand, at the first advent there was a great change in the dispensation, from Judaism to Christianity, from law to the gospel, from works to faith, from the schoolmaster to Christ (Gal. iii. 24); but there was no change in the world of mankind; they continued right on under the Roman yoke for centuries afterwards. Thus the distinction between these two significant words as used in the New Testament appears. A world is an order, or arrangement, or system of things, ordained of God for a long period of time, related to and affecting the entire race. An age is a shorter period included in the world, during which rules and methods obtain for the special guidance and training of God's people without any immediate reference to the world at large.

Some may still doubt that the worlds and the ages have the definite and specific significance given to them in the foregoing exposition. I can only say further to such ones that if they will look up the subject critically and carefully, they will find a great mass of evidence to confirm this view. In addition to all that has been presented, let the following facts be carefully noted and studied:

This word *æon* occurs in the New Testament in so many peculiar and varying forms as to make it certain that it expresses some deep and important meaning well worth searching out. First we have the single word many times repeated both in the singular and the plural; "this age," and "that age," "this present evil age," "be not conformed to this age," "the wisdom of this age," "the god of this age," etc.; also in the plural, the ages, past and to come, are spoken of many times; in the common version this word in the above expressions is rendered "world," but the word is *æon*, age, and should be so rendered. Then we have the word in connection with various prepositions: from the age, Luke i. 70; from the ages, Eph. iii. 9; out of the age, John ix. 32; before the ages, 1 Cor. ii. 7; before times of ages, or before age-times, Titus i. 2; the plan of the ages, Eph. iii. 11; the age to come, Heb. vi. 5; the ages to come, Eph. ii. 7; the end of the age, Matt. xxiv. 3; the end of the ages, Heb. ix. 26; the ends of the ages, 1 Cor. x. 11. In these expressions I give the literal of the original, as will be found in the Emphatic Diaglott, and in most cases in the margin of the new version. In the common version these expressions are translated in the most unwarranted and capricious manner, as I shall presently show. Furthermore, in connection with the preposition *eis* (which means to, for, unto, throughout, etc.), we have the following remarkable changes:

1. Unto the age, Mark iii. 29.
2. Unto the ages, Luke i. 33.

3. Unto all the ages, Jude 25.
4. Unto the age of the age, Heb. i. 8.
5. Unto all the generations of the age of ages, Eph. iii. 21.
6. Unto the ages of the ages, Rev. i. 6.
7. Unto the day of an age, 2 Pet. iii. 18.

It will help the reader to understand this last singular expression to know that it is exactly equivalent to that found in Mic. v. 2; see margin.

Can any one believe that these peculiar forms have no special meaning? Is all this a mere play upon words? — simply purposeless repetition? Remember God by his spirit is the real author of the inspired Word. “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy spirit.” Is it not certain then, as I have said, that these varying forms, so peculiar and striking, hide some spiritual mystery? and would it not have been more respectful to God’s Word if the translators of the common version and of the new version too, had rendered these expressions literally, even though they might not know what they meant, rather than to obscure the sense altogether by the false and capricious renderings in which they have indulged? However, if one will search diligently in the manner I have indicated, they will find the truth on this great subject and will come to an understanding of God’s worlds and ages.

If the reader looks these references out in the common version he will perhaps hardly believe that the above are literal translations of the same; but

if he will look them out in the Emphatic Diaglott, or any other suitable authority on the original, he will find them exactly correct; and he may be led to ask the question: Why are they not translated correctly in the common version? and why are these incorrect renderings of the common version perpetuated in the new version? It would seem that this word is left in this confusion for fear that by a correct translation of it the creed would be endangered; at least, this would seem to be the reason why these errors are perpetuated in the new version, because the revisers notice this same fault with reference to other words, — that is, translating the same original by several different English words, — and they point out with great painstaking how they have corrected the fault in very many passages, and yet in regard to this word they have followed in the track of their predecessors, and have been, if anything, even more inconsistent and capricious than they. The renderings I have given above are exactly literal; the reader can compare them with both the old and new versions, text and margin, and draw his own conclusions.

I will simply add in this connection that I have no doubt but that these ages, or “age-times,” as it is in some cases expressed, are foreshadowed in the law by the equally peculiar Sabbatic and Jubilee times. (See Lev. xxiii. and xxv., and other passages in the law.) The “seven days,” “seven weeks,” “seven months,” and “seven years” of the Sabbatic times and the “seven times seven years,” bringing us to

“the fiftieth year,” the year of Jubilee, — all these I doubt not are types and shadows of the ages, age of ages, and ages of ages, of the New Testament. The purpose of these Sabbatic and Jubilee times is also typical of “the purpose of the ages.” In and through the former were wrought out certain cleansings, releases, redemptions, and restorations on the natural plane, under the law. So in and through the age-times are wrought out the same things on the spiritual plane for beggared, enslaved, and lost man, under God’s grace. These are “the *times* of the restitution of all things” (Acts iii. 21) which shall continue their course until “in the dispensation of the *fulness* of times, all things in Heaven and earth shall be gathered together in Christ.”

Here then is the framework, the worlds and the ages, — God’s “time and seasons” (Acts i. 7) — upon which is wrought out God’s gracious designs and purposes, as we shall try to show in the next chapter. Furthermore, an understanding of this framework will help us especially in “rightly dividing the Word of truth.” With this framework in mind we shall be readily able to locate any particular passage of scripture — to tell the world and the age to which it belongs, and so to avoid confusion and error. All this will appear more and more plainly as we proceed in our study of the Word.

CHAPTER IV.

GOD'S WORK AND PLAN.

IN Eph. iii. 11, we find the expression, "according to the eternal purpose"; this should be rendered, "according to the purpose (or plan) of the ages," as may be seen in the margin of the new version, and in any word-for-word translation like Rotherham's, Young's, or the Emphatic Diaglott. Rotherham renders it, "according to a plan of the ages."

This expression is pregnant with meaning; it indicates that God, through the AGES, is prosecuting a certain WORK, according to a prearranged PLAN. The three points to consider, then, are the Ages, the Work, and the Plan. The first one we have already considered in the preceding chapter; in the present chapter, then, we are to consider the Work and the Plan.

GOD'S WORK.

In the first account of the creation (which closes with the third verse of the second chapter of Genesis), we are told that God created everything "very good," and then *rested*; and yet later on we find him at work again. Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John v. 17). How is this? The common idea amounts to about this: that God

made everything "very good," and rested; but that the devil steps in and upsets His work, spoils everything, so that the Lord has to go to work again to repair damages, and he has been at work ever since, together with Christ; ultimately they will get things pretty well straightened out; they will not be able to wholly undo the evil, or to entirely repair the mischief that the devil has done, for some will be lost forever, and suffer eternally in hell; however, the Father and the Son will succeed in rescuing a large number (some say the majority) of the race from this awful doom, and to this end they work. But who can accept this view after they have soberly thought it over as above? Does it not greatly detract from the character of God? in fact, does it not utterly falsify his character, making him out to be a weakling like ourselves, who can be thwarted in his will, obstructed in his plans, and successfully resisted? Views that lead to such conclusions *must* be erroneous. "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, what makest thou? or [shall] thy work [say], he hath no hands?" We have already learned in this volume that "All things are of God"; "He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," and we cannot accept any view that falsifies those grand and glorious statements. But then, what shall we do with the above apparently conflicting statements?—everything "very good," and God resting; and soon after, everything very bad, and going from bad to worse, apparently, and God working?

It is well known to all Bible students that in the first two chapters of Genesis we have two distinct, and in some respects apparently contradictory accounts of the creation. Skeptics have called attention to these apparent contradictions as evidences of the unreliable character of the Bible. The first account is contained in the first chapter and the first three verses of the second chapter. The second account embraces the remainder of the second chapter. The apparent contradictions and discrepancies between these two accounts are quite numerous and in some particulars rather startling, as any one can see who will carefully examine and compare them.

It seems a discrepancy, to begin with, that there should be two accounts. Why should not every particular and detail be embraced in one full account without perplexing us with two partial and varying ones? It would seem as though the one account would be preferable; surely this would be the verdict of human wisdom. But God's ways are not our ways nor his thoughts our thoughts. He has given us four gospels instead of one, thus supplying a fruitful field for cavillers to rake up objections and note contradictions. But there is not one discrepancy between the gospels that is not capable of a perfectly consistent solution, and that does not hide some gem of truth. So here in these two accounts there is a reason, we may be sure, for this dual presentation of this greatest event on record, the creation of the world. If we humbly sit at the feet of divine wisdom, as Mary sat at the feet of Jesus, it may

be that he will give us the key to unlock this mystery.

Remember, the Bible is written in parables and dark sayings. The scriptures are a veil as well as a revelation. In the Word Incarnate the truth was "hid" as well as revealed (Col. ii. 3); so it is in the Written Word. To some it is *given* to know the mysteries, to others it is *not* given.

We are sure that there is a *spirit* to this part of the Word, for Paul plainly indicates it when he tells us in Rom. v. 14, that Adam was a "figure" (*type*, same word as in margin of 1 Cor. x. 11), of Him that was to come, Jesus Christ, the *finished* Adam. This account then is an "allegory"; like that in the latter part of Gal. iv. it has a spiritual meaning; what is it? If I err not, the key that unlocks this mystery is this: The first account is *prophetical*, setting forth in mystic prophecy the work of creation as it was to be in the process, and as it will be in the perfect finished result. The second account is *historical*, setting forth the work as it actually was at that stage of the process.

The principle of mystic prophecy is stated by the apostle in Rom. iv. 17. "God calleth those things that be not as though they were." God speaks of what he *purposes* to do, as though it were *done*. He speaks of a work in *process* as though *completed*. He speaks of things that are *not* as though they *were*. The Bible is full of illustrations of this principle; take one very striking one.

Read the seventeenth chapter of Genesis and note the tense of the verb in the fifth verse. "A father of

many nations *have* I made thee." Humanly speaking, God had not at that time made Abraham a father of many nations. He had only one son, Ishmael, the child of the bondwoman; and in the common course of nature there was no possibility of his having any more (see Rom. iv. 17-21); and yet God says, "The father of many nations *have* I made thee," as though it was something he had already done for him. Paul tells us that God was speaking of things that were not, as though they were. God has a right to speak thus. What God purposes to do is as good as done; nothing can thwart or disarrange his plans; there is no possibility of failure. Hence he has a right to speak of things that are not as though they were. When God makes a promise he need not say, *I will* do so and so, but I *have done* it. In Rev. xxi. 5, 6, the expressed purpose, "Behold, I make all things new," is followed by the promise in the future tense, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." But sandwiched between the two, as if to assure us that there is no doubt about the fulfilment, comes in the grand declaration, "These words are faithful and true — *it is done*, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." Thus we may rest on God's promises with the same assurance as though we already had the fulfilment.

As God spoke to Abraham, so he spoke by the mouth of his servant Moses in the scripture we are studying. In this first account of the creation he is speaking of things that are not as though they were. He speaks not as things actually were at that time,

but as they *will* be when completed; but he has a right to speak in the past tense as we have seen, because this account is prophetic, expressing God's purpose, and hence *absolutely certain* of accomplishment.

In one respect at least we are sure that this first account speaks of things that are not as though they were; namely, when it says that Adam was created in the image of God. Now we are certain that Adam was *not* created in God's image at that time, — that no one has been thus created as yet except Jesus Christ. He is the only human being that has ever been finished; hence he is "the firstborn of every creature," and "the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. iii. 14). If Adam was actually created in the likeness of God, then *he*, and not Christ, was the beginning of God's creation. That Adam was not originally created in the image of God is also made plain in 1 Cor. xv. 45–49. In this passage Adam and Christ are *contrasted*; it is here shown how they *differed*. Adam was *not* like Christ; they were not "made" alike (verse 45). Hence, since Christ is like God, and Adam was not like Christ, Adam was not like God. This is certain; and yet we read in Gen. i. 28 that "God created man in his own image." How can we understand this except as above? And this is no more strange than what God says to Abraham, "A father of many nations *have* I made thee," "when as yet he had no child" (Acts vii. 5). The rule that God "calloeth those things that be not as though they were" makes all plain; and we shall

find that in every particular and detail this rule fully reconciles these two accounts.

The limits of this volume will not allow me to go into this most interesting subject in all its details; but if the reader have "eyes to see," and he will follow out this line of thought, he will, I think, be led into a rich mine of truth that will yield much precious ore. I shall have occasion again to refer to this principle and to give other illustrations.

The foregoing explains the apparent discrepancy of God resting, in Genesis, and working, later on. The announcement of God's rest is prophetic; it is yet in the future. Let it be also noticed in the account that it was *God* who rested on the seventh day; there was nothing said about man resting; it was *God's* rest day. Of course this has a spiritual meaning, for certainly God did not need to rest literally, as though he was tired. When is God's rest day? It had not come when Christ was here on earth, for he said, "My father worketh hitherto, and I work." But when the promised seed, the real Adam, of which the first Adam was only a "figure,"—when this finished seed is complete,—then will come God's rest day. It takes both the male and the female to make the one Adam (Gen. v. 1, 2). "God called *their* name Adam." Christ and his bride make the one "new man," the real Adam; and when he is come the work of *regeneration* will be given into his hands, just as generation was the work of the first Adam and Eve. And when the work is thus taken in charge by God's "Son," even his "firstborn,"

then God rests. "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, behold the tabernacle of God is with men; and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." What God sought for with his ancient people, "a sanctuary" (Ex. xxv. 8), and could not have because of their perversity (Ex. xxxiii. 7), he has at length found in the new heavens and new earth. His tabernacle is *with* men, and he will dwell *with* them, and they shall be *his* people, and God himself shall be *with* them and be their God. Notice how the idea of God's association with men is repeated three times, as though now at length the Father's heart was satisfied. He has got home; he is *with* his children; the completing of the work is handed over to the elder son, and the Father *rests*. "And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it *he* had rested from all his work which God created and made." O blessed rest of God, speedily dawn upon us, that the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man may be known in all the earth. This point will be still further illustrated in the second section of this chapter.

This explanation of the two accounts also fully sets forth the *work* of God. "My Father worketh." What is his work? *The creation of a race of beings like himself.* This work he announced when he said "in the beginning," "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion." When God said this he did not mean the first

man alone, but the *race*; and this is indicated in his manner of speaking. "Let us make *man* in our image, after our likeness, and let *them*" — not simply the first man, but *them*, all men, the entire human race — "let *them* have dominion." No man as yet has been created in the image of God excepting Jesus Christ, and man has never yet had the dominion promised; but he *will* have it through Jesus Christ, the pattern man of God's finished creation. This point also we shall notice again further on in the chapter.

It will make a great difference in all our theology whether we consider God's work as having been completed in Eden, and then upset by the devil, or whether we see that his creative work only began there, that the fall was a part of that work, and that redemption, resurrection, judgment, probation, are simply steps and stages in the same creative process. The common idea makes the fall of man no less a mishap to God than to man, and redemption is a makeshift expedient — a "scheme," as it is often expressed — to repair damages. No one can fail of seeing that such an idea is greatly derogatory to the character of God, making him "altogether such an one as ourselves," a being subject to accident and failure, instead of one "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will"; and yet we should have to accept this idea or else take the ground set forth in the foregoing. This is, I am persuaded, the true ground. Creation began in paradise; paradise lost was a step in the creative process; and all the re-

sults of that step up to paradise regained are further stages in the same process; no one as yet has gone through the whole process of creation, excepting Christ; he has reached the "perfect man"; all others have stopped short of that consummation, and gone down into "the dust of the earth." Christ is the first that should rise "out from among the dead ones," and after him, in God's "due season," shall come the race; for "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," and "as we have borne the image of the earthly, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly."

This, then, is God's work — the creation of a race of beings like himself. The Father and the Son are doing this creative work, and its ultimate accomplishment does not depend upon man at all. "We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. ii. 10). "We are God's husbandry [*farm*, see margin]; ye are God's building" (1 Cor. iii. 9). God is man's *proprietor*, and will surely make the best of his own property. Nay, more; God is man's *maker*, and he will not fail to have a "desire to the work of his hands" (Job xiv. 15), that it may be brought to completion and perfection. "If any man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creation." Surely a man cannot *recreate* himself any more than he could create himself in the first place. What *man* does, and the relation it has to the creative process, we shall see when we come to consider the question, "What is man?" (chap. viii.) also

free will (chap. ix.). The creative work, however, is in the hands of the Father and the Son, and is *sure* of a successful consummation.

This view is full of comfort. If we are God's workmanship, the work will surely be done, and done well. He speaks with the simplicity and quietness of conscious power, — "Let us make man in our image," — as though it were the easiest thing imaginable to make a man in the image of God; and "hath he said and shall he not do it? hath he spoken and shall he not make it good"? God's own veracity is at stake here; his own reputation and credit, so to speak, is involved. For his *own* sake he will complete and perfect his work; and so he speaks by his prophets. "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions FOR MINE OWN SAKE, and will not remember thy sins." Again he says, "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee." This is all the work of the Lord; hence the prophet breaks out, "Sing, O ye Heavens, *for the Lord hath done it*; shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein, for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob and glorified himself [mark it, glorified *himself*; made his own word good] in Israel. Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, and *he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh ALL things*; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself" (Isa. xlv. 21-24; see also Ezek. xx. whole chapter). If we can only see this truth, and get it well in

mind, we shall have no fear of the final result of God's creative plan. God's own honor is at stake. His declared purpose — "Let us make man in our image" — *cannot* fail. For his *own* sake, if not for man's, he will bring the work to a perfect completion, a faultless consummation; and a godlike race shall yet people the earth, to the universal praise of God's workmanship, and the honor and glory of the Christ, God's co-laborer.

This blessed truth also explains why man is so imperfect, and full of defects, and flaws, and failures. He is unfinished; he is only half made. "Ephraim is a cake not turned" (Hos. vii. 8). What can you expect of man in this crude, rough state? "He remembereth our frame; he knoweth that we are dust." I will also notice, by the way, that these considerations have a bearing on the question of the share that man has in the work of his own salvation. According to the common notion a man's salvation depends entirely on himself; in order to be saved *he* must fulfil certain *conditions*. God has done his part, made every provision and preparation; now *if* man will repent, and believe, and *do* this and that he will be saved; otherwise, not. I believe that this sort of teaching is a great mistake; it arises from a misapprehension of the nature of salvation, and of the work of God. The work of God, we have seen, is to create a race of beings like himself, and he is responsible for the completion and perfection of that work. And what is salvation? Just one word answers — *life*. Salvation, in a Bible sense, is life — life

from the dead. He who does not see this fact clearly will never arrive at a correct estimation of the *conditions* of salvation. He who *does* see this, will recognize at once the fact that a different aspect is put upon the question of the conditions. Fallen man in scripture is represented as *dead*, having "no life in him." What *we* call life, *i.e.* physical existence, is not recognized as such in the Bible. "Let the dead bury their dead" (Matt. viii. 22). In this Bible sense those bearing the corpse were as dead as the corpse itself. Recognizing this fact, we can readily appreciate another, — that the mission of Jesus is to bring *life* to a dead race. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Fallen man is not simply guilty, needing pardon, or sinful, needing cleansing; but he is *dead*, needing *life*, and anything short of that is vain, useless. Salvation, then, is life for a dead race. The scriptures are full of this truth; it is the great central truth of the word — Christ our life, not simply Christ our helper, or pattern, or mercy seat, or mediator, or elder brother; all this is blessed, and yet it falls short of the fulness of Christ's mission. He comes to bring life; he *is* our life as he himself declares. "I am the resurrection and the life." All this will be fully considered further on in the book; I refer to it now to show the relation between the work of God and what man does.

Salvation is the consummation of creation, the impartation of life — "the life of God" — to a dead race, thus bringing them finally to his image and

likeness ; and this work depends solely on God ; it is not conditional, for if it were it would be contingent ; but that is inconceivable ; we cannot for a moment suppose that God's creative work is contingent, or that he would begin a work and not bring it to a perfect finish. "When I begin, I will also make an end," saith the Lord (1 Sam. iii. 12).

In a word, the truth on this point, as I conceive it, — with which conception the scripture, I think, will be found fully accordant — is this : all that *man* does has to do with his training, development, instruction ; his final salvation, *i.e.* entrance into *life*, in no sense or degree depends on what he does. The end is fixed and settled in the immutable purpose of God, and *all* will ultimately be made alive in Christ, as surely and unconditionally as all have died in Adam. The misconception that many entertain on this subject arises from their religious training, and not from the teaching of the Bible. Salvation is conceived of as simply escape from the penalty of sin, *i.e.* an endless hell ; and in order to effect this escape man must *do* certain things, thereby securing to his own credit the merits of Christ ; add to the above the common ideas of crowding man's entire probation into this present life, and investing him with a power to persistently withstand his maker, so that in vain God expends upon him all the resources of infinite mercy, wisdom, and power — add these errors, and you have a groundwork of falsehood sufficiently broad to build up almost any amount of tradition, superstition, and absurdity. Such is the groundwork of the current

creeds. Is it any wonder that, founded upon error and misconception, they should be of the same material throughout.

On the other hand, when we see the truth — that salvation is life — the consummation of the creative work of God, the completion of Christ's mission, who came to give life, who *is* our life, "the life of the world," and hence is called the *Vivifier* — "the life-giver of the world," "the life-giver of all men" — when we see that this great work of giving life unto a dead race must be entirely of God, and has nothing to do with the penalty for sin, any more than it has with the reward of good works, and that the principal part of this great life-giving work is to be accomplished in "the ages to come" — when we see further that God has resources infinite, inexhaustible, "whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself" — when we see something of these grand truths, we shall talk no longer of the *conditions* of salvation. By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men *unconditionally*; so by the righteousness of one *the free gift* came upon all men unto justification of life — equally *unconditionally* (Rom. iv.). Man exercises his freedom intermediately, between death and life; the individual is not responsible for his dead state, nor can he help himself to life; but intermediately he is free; he has his choice, and is dealt with accordingly. Here comes in all that man does — repenting, believing, striving, working, praying, fighting, enduring — by these experiences man is developed, taught,

and trained, while he draws nearer and nearer to the final goal, which is immutably settled in the will of God. As the *beginning* must be of God, so is the end. As man cannot originate absolutely, neither can he determine. Beginnings and finalities are entirely in God's hands. "I am the first and the last, saith the Lord." "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." If it were not so, everything would be uncertain; if the final outcome were contingent, how could we be sure what it would be? it might be chaos, instead of the perfect *cosmos* of "all things made new." But when we are fully assured that God is the first and the last, then we can look upon all things intermediate with perfect trust and composure. Think you that God would make the ultimate results of his plans and purposes depend upon weak, foolish mortals?—place the infinite in the hands of the finite? I tell you nay; God alone determines eternity. "From everlasting to everlasting, I am God"; thus much for the work of God. We turn now to

THE PLAN.

The work of God is prosecuted according to a pre-arranged, definite plan. We might know that this was so from the fact that it is all of God; this being so, we should expect, of course, that nothing would be left to chance, or to the emergencies of the case, but that everything should be arranged with perfect precision beforehand; and yet the idea that the great mass of Christians have is about the same as though

they thought that God had no plan at all — that it was simply a haphazard scramble between good and evil; thus far the evil has had the best of it, but the good will triumph in the end; that is to say, the good will not gain a full and perfect triumph, but it will at least come out ahead. In opposition to this God-dishonoring idea, the scriptures set forth the glorious truth that God has a plan, the plan of the ages, prearranged and perfected before the first step in the creation of man was taken; a plan providing for every event and movement, and according to which every jot and tittle will be carried out. The programme of the creation has been written out by the Almighty, and every step in the process and the final outcome is infallibly settled. If the reader should think at this point that if this be so, what becomes of man's free moral agency, I will ask him to let that question wait until a little later; the present question is in regard to the plan of the ages.

The elucidation of this subject involves the mysteries of "the firstfruits," "the firstborn," the promised "seed," and the "one body."

It is well known to every Bible student that Jesus Christ is the firstfruits (1 Cor. xv. 20) and the firstborn from the dead (Col. i. 18). But it is not so generally noted that he is not the only firstfruits, nor the only firstborn. "Of His own will begat he us by the word of truth that *we* should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (Jas. i. 18; compare Rev. xiv. 4), and the gospel church is "the church of the firstborn" (Heb. xii. 23). But how can

there be two *firstfruits*? The answer to this is the mystery of the ONE BODY and the one promised SEED. These mysteries involve the truths — first, that the elect gospel church is the body of Christ, he being the head — “we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones” — and, second, that this One Body is the One Abrahamic Seed in whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed in “the ages to come.”

Paul fully sets forth these mysteries in his epistles. First see Gal. iii. 16, 29. In verse sixteen Paul emphasizes the fact that the Abrahamic seed is not many, but *one* — “He saith not, to *seeds*, as of many, but as of one, to thy *seed*.” Then the apostle declares that this one promised seed of Abraham is *Christ* — not Isaac, but Christ; then in verse twenty-nine he says, “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s *seed*, and heirs according to the promise.” Thus does it appear that although the seed is one, yet it includes many; and this apparent paradox is explained by the mystery of the one body — “many members, but one body” (Rom. xii. 4, 5; see also 1 Cor. xii. 12–27; Eph. v. 30–32). Now it is through this class of firstfruits, composing the one body and the promised seed, that God will bless all the families of the earth in the ages to come. These are the “elect,” who must first be perfected, and then, through them, God’s work of perfecting the race in his own image will be accomplished.

In plain language, without symbol or figure of speech, this mystery of the one body is as follows:

Jesus of Nazareth alone is not the complete annointed Saviour. He is the first and chief of a *class*, embracing "many sons" (Heb. ii. 10), and yet in such perfect unity and accord that they are spoken of as one, and they *will* be one when perfected in answer to the Saviour's prayer in John xvii., "that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee; that they may be one as we are one, perfect in one." And for what purpose? "That the world may believe," "that the world may know"; that is to say, this unity will be for the blessing of the world, according to the promise to the Abrahamic seed. The above idea may seem very strange and erroneous to those who have not thought of it before; but it can be fully substantiated by scripture, as I shall show. Some will be inclined to exclaim, "What! is not Jesus a perfect Saviour? must something be added to him to make him complete?" and they will be very loth to believe anything of the kind; and yet there is scripture to prove exactly this point. We shall find such scripture in the last two verses of the first chapter of Ephesians, where we read that Christ is "head over all things to the church, which is his body, the *fulness* of him that filleth all in all."

The word rendered "fulness" is peculiar; we have no single English word that will exactly express it: it means in the original, "that by which a thing is filled; a filling up, completing; a ship's complement, *i.e.* her crew," etc. We have, however, a precise explanation of this word in two passages of scripture that is perfectly satisfactory. (See Matt. ix. 16 and

Mark ii. 21.) “No man putteth a piece of new cloth into an old garment, for *that which is put in to fill up* taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.” In this passage all the words in italics are from the one word which in Eph. i. 23 is translated “fulness.” Here we have, therefore, the exact meaning of this peculiar word, so that we need have no doubt about it; and if Paul knew what he was talking about, if he knew how to use words properly, we are to understand that the church, *i.e.* the body of true disciples in this gospel age, is “that which is put in to fill up” Christ, or to make him complete; implying, of course, that he is not complete without the church. Here is a wonderful revelation. Most Christians know that *we* are only complete in *him* (Col. ii. 10); but few realize the fact that it is equally true that *he* is only complete in *us*, that the church is just as essential to Christ to make him complete as he is to the church to make it complete. This great truth is implied in the figure of the one body; all the members are mutually dependent upon and essential to one another, so that “the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of thee”; thus are we taught that the head needs the members as much as the members need the head; “and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.” Thus are the head and members intimately united and mutually needful. This was illustrated in the case of Saul of Tarsus; when the Lord met him on the

way to Damascus he exclaims, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *me*?" Saul never persecuted Jesus personally; but in persecuting his members he was persecuting him, for if one member suffers all the members suffer with it, and not less the head than any other member, but rather the more. It might be said that we were making too much of the figure to carry it out to such an extent as above if it were not for this last illustration, and especially the positive statement in Eph. i. 23, that the church is essential for the completion of Christ; this surely is sufficient to make the truth plain and to warrant the position taken. This one body is first perfected; then in it, in the ages to come, all the world are blessed and saved.

A great mass of scripture confirms this view besides what we have already noticed. For example, in the Revelation there are two distinct companies of the saved; the firstfruits of chapter fourteen, a company of a definite number, one hundred and forty-four thousand, and the "great multitude which no man could number" of chapter seven.

Again, in the Old Testament, the last verse of the prophecy of Obadiah tells us that when the kingdom is the Lord's, which will be in the new heavens and new earth (compare Rev. xi. 15-18), then "saviours," not one, but many, shall come up on Mount Zion and judge the Mount of Esau.

This view is also confirmed by the types of the law. Under the law there were two firstfruits, and then the great ingathering. The law is a shadow of

good things to come (Heb. x. 1), and we find this shadow agreeing with the substance as above explained. There were three great feasts under the law, Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles (Lev. xxiii.). A firstfruits was to be offered both at the Passover and at Pentecost; these two feasts occurred in the early part of the ecclesiastical year, which began in the spring. Tabernacles came in the fall of the year, when the general harvest was gathered in. We know that Christ is the antitype of the paschal firstfruits. "Christ our passover is crucified for us" (1 Cor. v. 7, 8). The paschal firstfruits was a single sheaf of wheat, and was to be waved before the Lord "on the morrow after the Sabbath," accompanied, for a burnt offering, by a single male lamb without blemish. Christ is the antitype. He rose from the dead "the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. xv.), on the morrow after the Sabbath (Mark xvi. 1), and he is the "lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. i. 19). Thus Christ our passover was crucified for us. Fifty days after Passover came Pentecost, and we know that the church fulfils this type; on that day the church received the "gift of the holy spirit," "which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." Thus both Christ and the church are firstfruits. Christ is "the *first* of the firstfruits" (Ex. xxiii. 19), and the church also is "a kind of firstfruits" (Jas. i. 18), "the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb" (Rev. xiv. 4).

Thus Passover and Pentecost are fulfilled in Christ

and the church; these are the two firstfruits; does that include all the saved? Where would be the significance of calling them *firstfruits* if no other fruits were to follow? and where would be the anti-type of the third great feast at the close of the year, — the feast of Tabernacles, or of ingathering? Pass-over and Pentecost prefigure Christ and the church the firstfruits; does not Tabernacles beautifully and grandly prefigure the “times of the restitution of all things” (Acts iii. 21), when, in “the ages to come,” God will show forth “by the church” “the exceeding riches of his grace”?

There is one other figure used to set forth this great truth of the one body, and of the firstfruits, viz. that which represents Christ and the church as husband and wife. He is the bridegroom; the church is espoused to him (just as God’s ancient people were espoused to *him*; e.g. Ezek. xvi.) as a chaste virgin (2 Cor. xi. 2); and “they twain are *one* flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Eph. v. 22–32). Now notice that this bride of Christ glorified is represented by the New Jerusalem coming down from God, out of heaven (Rev. xxi. 1–10), and this Jerusalem, which is now above, is “the mother of us all” (Gal. iv. 26). Is the mother alone to be redeemed? Are there not to be children, “a great multitude which no man could number”? Read the fifty-fourth chapter of Isaiah, and see what the Lord has to say in answer to this question.

Furthermore, the plan of the ages explains the

“high calling” which Paul was so anxious to obtain. In the third chapter of his epistle to the Philippians the apostle fully sets forth this point, representing himself as making the most strenuous efforts, “counting all things but loss,” and bending all his energies to “this one thing”; namely, “the prize of the *high* calling of God in Christ Jesus.” How perfectly plain is all this in the light of the plan! The *high* calling is of the firstfruits, who “have part in the *first* resurrection” (Rev. xx. 6); who are to be kings, and priests, and judges, and saviours in the ages to come. These are the “very elect,” the overcomers, the “little flock” to whom it is the Father’s good pleasure to give the kingdom (Luke xii. 32). These are they, also, who build on Christ with gold, silver, and precious stones, and receive a “reward” over and above mere salvation; for those who build on Christ with wood, hay, and stubble are saved, “yet so as by fire” (1 Cor. iii. 11–15). This high calling, again, is the *special* salvation referred to in 1 Tim. iv. 10, in contradistinction to the *common* salvation which Jude speaks of (Jude 3).

This same plan of the ages makes clear also that most perplexing Bible doctrine of ELECTION. No one at all familiar with the Bible will deny but that it teaches election of some sort, and that, too, in a very positive and decided manner; so that the Christian church is about equally divided on this question, one side believing with Calvin in the eternal decrees, election and reprobation, etc., and the other side, with Arminius, denying the Calvinistic view; and

yet they have great difficulty to explain according to their theory of "free salvation" the positive scripture upon which Calvinism is founded; *e.g.* Rom. viii. 28-30. But in the light of this wondrous plan of the ages this whole vexed question is settled at once. God's dealings with mankind have been on the line of election from the creation down to the present time; at any rate, if we go no further back than the call of Abraham we are sure that this has been his rule. Was not Israel an elect people? We know that both the Old Testament and the New are full of this idea; so the gospel church are no less elected. Christ, its head, was elected (Isa. xlii. 1); so were its founders, the twelve apostles (John xv. 16); so those gathered into the early church (Acts ii. 39, 47; xiii. 48); most of the epistles are directed to the elect, who were "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world," and all through this gospel age this same election obtains. We can see it, for instance, geographically. Why did the gospel rise in Palestine and travel northward and westward through those countries inhabited by the Caucasian race as it has, even down to the present day, while by far the larger part of the earth's population, lying to the eastward and southward of Palestine, were left for centuries in total darkness, and even at the present day have comparatively but the merest glimmering of gospel light? Was this accident? What Christian can believe it, when we know that "He that sitteth in the heavens" "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will"? And is not this election? Are not the souls

of the Mongolian and African races as precious as ours? Are they not as dear to the great Father of all? And yet they are left in darkness, and light is given to us.

The plan of the ages explains all. The *firstfruits* are elected; this is a chosen company; and in connection with this elect body, all those scriptures belong that treat upon election. But in the ages to come, the times of the restitution of all things, the freest and fullest grace will obtain; *all* shall know the Lord — “the knowledge of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea”; and in those ages of glory and universal blessing, there is ample room for that large class of broad and generous scriptures (see the chapter next to the last) that speaks of the full and absolute triumph of truth, and life, and love. Rightly divide the Word, according to the plan of the ages, putting election where it belongs, and free grace where *it* belongs, and all is clear and plain. Election does not, as is commonly supposed, necessarily imply reprobation, — the election of a few and the condemnation of all the rest, — but the few elected ones are to be the channel through which God is to *bless* all the rest: as God said to Abraham, “I will bless *thee*, and thou shalt *be* a blessing; and *in* thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” This is Bible election, — not elected simply to be blessed, but to be a *blessing*; so Peter puts it — “not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing, knowing that thereunto are ye called that ye might inherit a blessing.” The true elect of God are called

to *be* a blessing to others, and thereby are they most highly blessed. Thus this doctrine, in the light of the plan of the ages, is not the monstrously unjust thing that ultra Calvinists would make it; but it is a glorious doctrine of mercy, and wisdom, and love, manifested toward every son and daughter of the race.

We will now consider Rom. viii. 19-23.

“The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now; and not only so, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the spirit; even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption [or rather *sonship*]; to wit, the redemption of our body.”

Here is the entire plan of the ages in epitome. Let the reader consider first how utterly irreconcilable is the above scripture with orthodoxism.

First, the whole creation¹ is represented as *waiting*

¹ Some commentators have been so hard pressed to make this passage harmonize with the current creeds that they have advanced the view that the term *creature*, or rather *creation*, refers to the material and brute creation. But this idea is manifestly only a makeshift, and is unreasonable and absurd on the face of it; for, first, see the use of this word in the following passages: Mark x. 6; xvi. 15; 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15; Col. i. 15; Rev. iii. 14; from these it appears that the word means mankind, the human

with earnest expectation, even with groaning and travailing together in pain, for a certain thing, viz. the revealing of the sons of God; it does not say the *Son* of God; if it did it could be reconciled with the common view; but it is the *sons* of God; who are these sons of God for whom the whole creation waits with such intense longing? Then we are told that the creation was made subject to vanity, *i.e.* this fallen state, not of its own will, but by the will of Him who hath subjected the same in hope, *i.e.* by the will of God. Here is a most startling statement. What! was it by the will of God that man fell? So is it plainly implied in this scripture. If you wish to know the significance of the term *vanity*, read the book of Ecclesiastes; that book is a full commentary on the enjoyments, emoluments, honors, follies, and weaknesses of this present life, which it declares to be *vanity* — “vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” But why did God do such a strange thing as make the creation subject to vanity, this fallen state, this bondage of corruption? Why, in hope that it should be delivered therefrom into the liberty of the glory of the children of God, — a hope that will doubtless be realized, for God’s hope amounts to a certainty. Then the apostle goes on to state that not only is the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain

race. Furthermore, how could it be said of the material or brute creation that God subjected it to vanity in hope that it should be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God? and with what propriety could the material or brute creation be contrasted, as in verse 23, with “ourselves which have the *firstfruits* of the spirit”?

in this earnest waiting attitude, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the spirit, we likewise are waiting with the same intensity of desire; but, strange to say, *we* are not waiting for the same thing that the creation waits for; the creation waits for the revealing of the sons of God; we wait for our sonship, to wit, the redemption of our body; not the redemption of our *bodies* (plural), but our *body*. Has orthodoxism any explanation for this strange condition of things? is there any room in the current creeds for this strange teaching? Not a particle; the common theology can make nothing but a jumble and a muddle of this glorious scripture; or else candidly acknowledge (which is the more honest course) that it is not understood, and cannot be satisfactorily explained, *i.e.* in accordance with the current creeds. Let the reader look into the standard commentaries, and see for himself if this is not a true statement of the case. Says Adam Clark: "There is considerable difficulty in this passage. Dissertations without end have been written upon it; and it does not appear that the Christian world are come to any general agreement on the subject." Says Albert Barnes: "Perhaps there is not a passage in the New Testament that has been deemed more difficult of interpretation than this; and after all the labors bestowed upon it by critics, still there is no explanation proposed that is perfectly satisfactory, or in which commentators concur." Such is the aspect of the question concerning this passage from the standpoint of orthodoxism.

But, on the other hand, the reader cannot have failed to notice, even while we have been considering this scripture thus far, how perfectly it is in accord with the plan of the ages as already enunciated.

The sons of God are the same, as those who compose the one body and the promised seed, the firstfruits, or those "having the firstfruits of the spirit," as it is expressed in this scripture; for the revealing of these sons of God the whole creation waits, because until the *firstfruits* are gathered, the general harvest must remain unhoused, so to speak; the seed must be perfected before the work of blessing all the families of the earth *in* that seed can begin; hence it is perfectly plain why the whole creation waits for the revealing of these sons. We have seen also in the foregoing how the fall is a part of the plan, and is "of God" just as much as the redemption; according to God's "plan of the ages," it is perfectly intelligible why he should make the creation subject to vanity, and the certainty of the hope is made fully apparent,—the whole creation *shall* be delivered, there is no manner of doubt about it. It is also beautifully clear according to the "plan" why "we that have the firstfruits of the spirit" should be waiting,—with equal intensity of longing—but for something entirely different from what the creation waits for. We wait for the *sonship*, to wit, the redemption of our *body*; *i.e.* we wait for the first resurrection whereby we may become the sons of God (Luke xx. 36; compare Rom. i. 3, 4), and the

mystical body (of which Christ is the head and "they that are Christ's" are the members) be made complete; which body is the promised seed in whom all the families of the earth are to be blessed. The creation, of course, waits for the revealing of these sons, since *they* cannot be blessed until the seed is perfected.

Is not all this perfect harmony? and does it not demonstrate the correctness of the foregoing exposition? and does it not open up a glorious future in the development of God's plan, and the blessing of the race? and furthermore, does it not vindicate the wisdom and righteousness of God? for although *he* made the creation subject to vanity, by his *own* will (as he "worketh *all* things after the counsel of his own will," Eph. i. 11), yet it was done in hope; a hope "*sure* and steadfast" (Heb. vi. 19); and full provision has been made (the "plan of the ages") whereby the whole creation *shall* be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God; and thus shall the divine oath be realized. "As truly as I live, saith the Lord, all the earth shall be filled with my glory" (Num. xiv. 21).

It remains to speak briefly of the manner in which this new heavens and new earth will be brought about. Much has been said already in the first section of this chapter upon this point. The reader will have noticed that the views set forth imply the pre-millennial coming of Christ. This is the positive teaching of scripture; by many lines of Bible argument is it proved that there will be no millennium of

universal peace and righteousness before the coming of Christ; on the contrary, we are taught that evil and sin will continue to hold sway and to increase up to the end of the present dispensation, and its closing scenes will be amid awful judgments and retributions, as has been the case with every preceding age (*e.g.* 1 Tim. iv. 1-3; 2 Tim. iii. 1-13; 2 Thess. ii. 1-8). One of the strongest passages to prove this point we have already noticed; that is Jas. v. 1-9. In this scripture we are most positively taught that we are to look for no great improvement in the corrupt and wicked condition of things around us until "the coming of the Lord"; we must wait patiently for this grand event before we can expect deliverance.

Christ shall come then, "this same Jesus" (Acts i. 11), and first the promised seed shall be perfected; "like a thief" shall he come to take his bride, that they may be "forever with the Lord." Then shall be "set up" (Dan. ii. 44) the Lord's kingdom, and the dominion shall be given to Christ and his saints (see last part of Dan. vii.), and these, as a "stone cut out of the mountain without hands" (Dan. ii.), shall break in pieces and destroy all the wicked governments of earth (Psa. cxlix.), and the "whole earth is at rest and is quiet"; and then shall be inaugurated that glorious condition of things which shall result in all knowing the Lord. We have already quite fully considered this point in the preceding chapter; and we have considered it still further in the pages following, especially in the chapter on Probation and Judgment.

I would add, before advancing to another chapter, that this chapter and the one preceding, on the Worlds and the Ages, and God's Work and Plan, are perhaps the most important in the book; and I would recommend to the reader that he have these subjects well in mind before proceeding. If he will go back and read these two chapters over again I think he will be well repaid.

CHAPTER V.

“WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?”

HAVING considered the framework of the worlds and the ages, the work God is carrying out upon that framework, and the plan according to which that work is being wrought, we come now to study the nature and character of the principal personage in that plan, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The study of Jesus is the one all-important study of the Word. He *is* the Word; and we are to endeavor, according to the “wisdom that the holy spirit teacheth,” to interpret that living Word. Questions, numberless, and most momentous, crowd upon us as we turn to this most wonderful personage, this unique and supernatural character. “What think ye of Christ; whose Son is he?” How did he enter into this world, and for what purpose? why did he die? what is the significance of “*his* resurrection” (Phil. iii. 10)? how did he make an atonement? etc. Standing at the confluence of the ages, four thousand years after the creation of man, he appears in awe-inspiring grandeur, a lone, solitary figure, unparalleled and unapproached by any other being since the world began. Who is he? no wonder they asked questions about him. “We would see Jesus” (John

xii. 21). What shall we do with him? (Matt. xxvii. 22). The apostle says, "We see Jesus." Where? Not now, as of old, among the Judæan hills, and along the Galilæan shores, but in "the scriptures of truth," and in the lives of his followers. We are to look for him now in the scriptures; may we look for him with such a spirit that we shall find him, and be able to say, "*We see Jesus.*"

In the following suggestions in regard to the doctrines of Christ, I wish the reader to understand that I do not write in a controversial or dogmatic spirit. I do not expect so much to present the exact and absolute truth on the points considered, as to suggest lines of thought that, more or less directly, will *lead* to the truth. I do not expect the reader to agree with me in every point; but I trust that non-agreement in matters of Bible interpretation will not prevent that "unity of *spirit*" (Eph. iv. 3) which will enable us to "labor together" in an honest search for the truth. If some of my readers are helped by my efforts into the right way of *thinking*, I shall be better satisfied than as though they accepted all my thoughts as right, for I am not at all sure that they *are* all right; for now we see through a glass darkly, and know only in part. I simply lay before the reader these great subjects as I apprehend them.

There are some subjects that we must touch upon very briefly, and others that we will notice more at length. We begin with the

PRE-EXISTENCE.

I understand that the Bible plainly teaches that Christ pre-existed as the Word before his incarnation as the Son; that he was with God "in the beginning," when God said, "Let *us* make man in *our* image." All we know of Christ in this pre-incarnate state, as the divine "Logos," is dim and obscure; but that he really had such an existence seems to me plain and positive. Such passages as the following seem to me to favor his pre-existence (John i. 1, 2; vi. 62; viii. 58; xvii. 5; 2 Cor. viii. 9; Col. i. 17). I do not present these isolated passages as proof, however, for it seems to me a very unsatisfactory way to prove a doctrine. Every one of the above scriptures can be explained in harmony with the opposite view; it is not upon isolated texts that a doctrine should be founded, but upon the harmony of scripture as a whole. It is because the doctrine of the pre-existence makes such harmony that I believe it, as I will try and show.

I do not believe that Jesus Christ is the "eternal Son of God," simply because that phrase is self-contradictory and hence meaningless; to talk of an "eternal son" is as senseless as it would be to speak of a round square, or a straight curve, or a full vacuum; the terms of the expression are mutually destructive, and hence it means nothing. In his pre-existent state we know Jesus simply as "the Word," having a personal existence, for reasons that we will notice further on; but he did not actually

become the Son until his incarnation; of this also we will give the proof anon. Briefly, then, to sum up: the Bible teaches that Jesus had a personal pre-existence as the Word, and that he became the Son of God when he became the Son of man, — at his incarnation.

THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST.

The simple Bible statement is, “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” Before his incarnation he was simply the Word. At his conception he became the Son of God by creation, as was Adam (Luke iii. 38). At his birth he became the Son of man. At his resurrection he became “the Son of God with power (*i.e.* in the full, spiritual sense), according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. i. 4). We will notice these points in detail.

It seems very positive that the pre-incarnate appellation of Christ is the Word; but was he not also the Son of God? I think not, and for this reason. When the angel announced to Mary the birth of Christ, and she asks, “How shall this be?” the angel answered, “The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; *therefore* that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called a Son of God.” The definite article, “the,” is not in the original, but is put in, without authority, by the translators of both the old and the new version, apparently to support the doctrine of the deity of Christ, as we will notice

further on ; it should read as above, “a Son of God.” Christ is “the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. viii. 29). He is one among “many sons” (Heb. ii. 10). Now notice the force of the “therefore” in the above passage. Read the text over again and you will see that the meaning is that *because* Christ was brought forth by “the power of the Highest,” “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”; and under the overshadowing influence of the Holy Spirit, *therefore* and thereby he became a Son of God ; this plainly implies that before he was thus brought forth, he was not (in this sense at least) a Son of God ; that is, as we might express it, he was not a *human* Son of God (as Adam was a human son of God by creation) : if the manner of his incarnation was the *cause* of his becoming a human Son of God, as is clearly taught in this passage, then of course he was *not* a Son of God in this sense before his incarnation. “What was he then before his incarnation?” some one asks ; I do not know, I reply ; it is not revealed any further than that he was the divine Logos, possessing unspeakable “glory” (John xvii. 5) and unbounded “riches” (2 Cor. viii. 9), and “in the form of God” (Phil. ii. 6.) ; we cannot tell the import of these declarations in regard to the pre-existent Word ; they stand as the merest hints of the mysterious fellowship between God and the Word before the world was, a description of which we seem to have in Prov. viii. Out of the wondrous depths of that glory that he had with the Father before the world

was, which glory was God himself (John xvii. 5), the Word comes, is made flesh, and dwells among us; then, and not till then, "we behold his glory," we come to know him, and through him to know God, and thus to obtain eternal life (John xvii. 3).

We pass on now to notice another question. How was the Word made flesh? I reply, by the creative power of God and by natural generation. Adam was created an adult, in full possession of all the faculties and functions of mature manhood; but Christ was created in embryo, a mere life germ in the womb of Mary, and then generated and brought into the world in the natural way. In proof of this see the passage we have already noted in Luke i. Mary, on being told that she should bring forth a child, asks, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" The answer is, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore," etc. Now turn to the first account of the creation, and we read that "the spirit of God moved upon (brooded over or 'overshadowed') the face of the waters" and the outcome is the creation there set forth in mystic prophecy. The spirit of God here stands for the *power* of God (compare Matt. xii. 28 with Luke xi. 20; also Acts i. 8); it was by God's creative power that the first Adam came into being, and he was, therefore, a son of God; so Christ by the same power was created in embryo, and so became *a* Son of God; of course there can be no question on the score of ability; if God could create the adult man he could create the life germ:

this view does away with the absurd Popish dogma of the so-called "Immaculate Conception." The simple fact is that in the birth of Christ the creative power of God was substituted for the pro-creative function of the male; while the process of gestation belonging to the female was carried on as in every natural birth. This view explains also how Christ is both Son of God and Son of man, — how he is "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh"; and yet he is the beginning of a new beginning that was to culminate in "the New Man." Had he been wholly the product of God's creative power he would not have been of our race at all, but of *another* human race. Had he been begotten "by the will of man" and "born of a woman," he would have been no different from the rest of the fallen race; but simply "altogether such an one as ourselves," and the beginning of no new order of things or "new creation." But being the joint product of God's creative power and of natural generation, he is at the same time Son of God and Son of man, a veritable member of the fallen human race, and yet the beginning of a new creation; so that we can say with the prophet, "Unto us a *child* is *born*, unto us a *son* is *given*" (Isa. ix. 6). O wonderful mystery! Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us, and yet he was "made like unto his brethren in all things." He is "God manifest in the flesh"; human and yet divine; divine and yet human.

THE SACRIFICE AND DEATH OF CHRIST.

The common idea is that the sacrifice and death of Christ was his life of self-denial and suffering while here on earth and his cruel death on the cross. But neither of these were the real sacrifice he made, nor the real death he suffered; these were a part of his sufferings, and the believer shares in them, filling up the measure (Col. i. 24), that he may "also reign with him." So far as these deprivations and physical sufferings were concerned, it would be hard to say how Christ sacrificed or suffered any more than many a martyr; indeed, such a view of Christ's sacrifice and death falls far short of the truth and really belittles both. Paul clearly sets forth Christ's sacrifice in 2 Cor. viii. 9, — "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty be rich." This passage, it seems to me, clearly teaches the pre-existence of Christ, and fully sets forth the sacrifice he made. It would certainly be difficult to tell when Christ was rich unless we go back of his incarnation to "his riches in glory"; those riches he laid down and became poor that we, through his poverty, might become rich, and here was the sacrifice he made. With this view in mind we can understand the Saviour's words in John x. 17, 18: "Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take

it again." What life is Jesus talking about here? his earth life, most Christians would say. But there is nothing in scripture to show that Christ laid down his physical life in any sense different from what any martyr might be said to have laid down their life. To be sure, he voluntarily consented to die; but many a martyr has done the same; Paul, for instance, when he spake from a Roman dungeon in momentary expectation of martyrdom, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." Christ was "put to death," "cut off out of the land of the living," as thousands have been before and since. Moreover, we are *sure* that he did not himself take up his physical life, for we are repeatedly told that God raised him from the dead. Christ had no more power to raise himself than any human being has. We have positive proof of this in 1 Cor. vi. 14. "God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his *own* power." Thus does it appear, that Christ neither laid down his natural life in any special sense, nor did he take it again; and yet he says, "I lay down my life of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again." What life? we ask again; not his natural life, but his pre-existent life that he had before he entered into man's fallen estate. *This* was the life he laid down, and *this* was the life he took again after that "God raised him from the dead." This view is fully confirmed by a correct translation of the passage we are considering. According to the margin of the new version the passage

should read, "I lay down my life of myself; no man *took* it away," etc. According to this rendering the life that Jesus was talking about was one that he had already laid down. The Sinaitic and Vatican MSS., two of the *best* authorities, confirm this view by rendering the passage, "No man *hath taken* it from me," etc. Thus it appears very certain that the life Jesus laid down was his pre-existent life,—a life he had already sacrificed, a life fully in his own power to lay down and to take up according to the "commandment" of his Father.

Having thus determined the real sacrifice that Jesus made, and the life that he laid down, we are prepared to understand the death he suffered. When the Word left the glory and riches of his pre-existent state, and "was made flesh," what sort of a condition did he enter into? Was it another life? No; it was *death*. When the Word was made flesh, he entered into a condition of death, and remained *dead* (in this sense) during his entire earth-life; hence, the death he suffered was thirty-three and a half years long; even all the time he tabernacled in the flesh. This is as it should be; Christ laid down his life—his pre-existent life—and in so doing he entered, not into another life, but into death; by a human birth he was made a partaker of fallen human nature, that by a divine birth, *we* might be made "partakers of the divine nature." He entered fully into the condition of fallen man, even so far as to be "made sin" and "made a curse"; he was made in *all* points like unto his brethren, except that he did no sin. Now, then,

this fallen condition of man is a condition of death; what the scriptures call "the animal man" (1 Cor. ii. 14) is in a condition of death; from a Bible standpoint he *is* dead. The Bible definition of death is, "to be carnally minded" (Rom. viii. 6, 7); this is the condition of all that are "in the flesh." Says Christ to the Jews, "Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, ye have *no life in you*" (John vi. 53). They might have replied, "Why, we have *some* life in us; we are at least alive physically." But no, ye have *no* life in you — not a particle of that which the scriptures recognize as life. When one said to him, I will follow thee, but let me first go and bury my father, he replied, "Let the dead bury their own dead"; those who bore the bier were not less dead, in this Bible sense, than the corpse that lay upon it. All the life that even the Christian has now is by faith; says Paul, "The life that I *now* live, I live by the faith of the Son of God"; and to the Colossians he says, "Ye are *dead*, and your life is hid with Christ in God." This is an important point, and is worthy of a full consideration. I refer to it now in order that each may understand the real death that Jesus suffered — not the few hours of agony on Calvary, or the three days' "sleep" in Joseph's tomb; but the thirty-three years and a half of his sojourn among the lost and dead. From the manger and swaddling clothes of his infancy, to the cross and linen winding-sheet of his passion, it was one long experience of death; — the same dark and terrible charnel house as that which imprisons fallen man. We cannot imagine the un-

speaking horror of such a death to Christ, for *we* never knew what life is. But coming as he did from "the bosom of the Father" into this dark pit of corruption, his life-long death (if I may use such a paradoxical expression) must have been terrible beyond all human expression or comprehension. *This* was a sacrifice, and *this* was a death worthy of the Son of God. The ordinary view reduces the sacrifice and death of Christ to very meagre and commonplace proportions; according to this view he was simply a religious martyr, like thousands of others who have suffered and died for their religion. But if the sacrifice and death of Christ was as explained above, then he stands in this respect, as in all others, alone and unapproachable by any other being. *He* made a sacrifice that no other being could make. *He* suffered a death that only one endowed with his life could die.

There is another consideration that still further confirms the above view; it is drawn from the law; it is to the effect that Christ's death on the cross could not have been his sacrificial death, because legally and antitypically it was simply the fulfilment of the law in regard to the disposal of the dead carcass of the sin-offering, *after* the sacrifice was made. We know that the law is a "shadow of good things to come," and that every jot and tittle of it must be fulfilled. Now under the law, an animal that was offered as a sin-offering was to be slain before the door of the tabernacle, and its blood poured out at the foot of the altar, and thus was the sacrifice to be made. But the dead carcass of the sin-offering,

as an unclean thing, was to be carried off "without the camp" and burned with fire (Ex. xxix. 14; Lev. iv. 11, 12; xvi. 27). Christ's death on the cross was the fulfilment of this latter type; namely, the burning of the dead carcass of the sin-offering "without the camp." This may seem to some who have not thought of it before, a very strange application of the type; but there is no doubt but that it is correct, because just exactly this application is made in Heb. xiii. 10-14. It will be seen from this passage that the death of Christ on the cross "without the gate," was in fulfilment of that part of the type of the sin-offering that pertained to the disposal of the dead body "without the camp," after that it had been slain and its blood poured out to make an atonement. Thus does it appear that the sacrificial death of Christ was *not* his death on the cross, but previous to that, since his death on the cross was the antitype of the disposal of the *already dead* carcass of the sin-offering; and thus does it appear, also, that Christ was in a condition of death while here in the flesh. This is decisive, unless this testimony in Hebrews is entirely rejected; by this testimony it certainly appears that we must go back of Christ's physical death on the cross to find his real sacrificial death.

We will now consider still another confirmation of this view. Paul says of Christ that "God raised him from the dead now no more to *return* to corruption." Notice in this passage how we are taught that Jesus was in a corruptible state, but that God raised him from that condition no more to return thereto. But

when was Jesus in this corruptible condition? Not while he was in the grave, for we are expressly told that while there he "saw no corruption" (Acts xiii. 37); and yet he *was* in a corruptible condition sometime during his earth life, for he was raised therefrom now no more to return thereto. The foregoing view of his sacrifice and death answers this question. He was in the corruptible condition all the while he tabernacled in the flesh; he was in "the bondage of corruption," like "the whole creation," for he was made *sin* and *a curse* for us; *this* was the corruption in which he was involved and out of which he was raised; and this was the death *out* of which God saved him according to Heb. v. 7, 8; new version, margin.

We will notice one more incidental confirmation of the position we have taken. Read Isa. liii. 9, and notice the margin on the word *death*, that it is plural. "He made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his *deaths*." Why, did Christ die more than *one* death? Yes; we have seen that he entered a condition of death, that is, he died, when he was "made flesh"; he also suffered death on the cross. Now the passage exactly fits these two deaths; and with only his physical death in mind, it would be very hard to reconcile the language of this passage with the facts in the case. Christ did not make his grave "with the wicked" in his physical death; he was placed in a new tomb wherein never man had yet laid; and this tomb belonged to Joseph of Arimathea, who was "a good man and a just," "who also himself waited for the kingdom," and was one

of "Jesus' disciples"; and yet he made his grave with the *wicked* and with the *rich* in his deaths." How clear this passage is in the light of the truth! When Christ laid down his pre-existent life and entered into the charnel house of this fallen state, "he made his grave with the wicked," *i.e.* with fallen man; and when he died physically, he was laid in the tomb of the wealthy Arimathean, and thus made his grave with the rich.

I have thus given what I believe to be the Bible doctrine of Christ's sacrifice and death; and it will be seen that this Bible view necessarily involves the pre-existence of Christ. As I have discussed this point with special reference to a class of Christians who deny the pre-existence, I will now endeavor to sum up the evidence.

SUMMARY.

We have seen that there are a number of passages of scripture that seem to prove the pre-existence; but, as already intimated, these single passages may be reconciled, in one way and another, with almost any other theory that might be adopted; but we have seen how thoroughly the pre-existence is sustained by other considerations, growing out of the harmony of scripture and its incidental support; this, to my mind, is much more satisfactory evidence than isolated passages of scripture.

We have seen that the real sacrifice and death of Christ was when he gave up the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, and entered

the condition of fallen man. This view seems to be demanded by the rare and unparalleled character of the event; the ordinary view belittles the whole affair, making the sacrifice and death of Christ simply one among thousands of such events; whereas the true view exalts and signalizes the event, so that it stands out, alone and unapproachable, in the history of the world — *the* great sacrifice, and the *one* death, that could bring about the atonement (at-one-ment). But besides these considerations, we have strong scriptural evidence to establish the view advanced. We find that whatever life it was that was sacrificed, it was one over which Christ had complete control, to lay it down and to take it up at will. Such control we have seen he did *not* have over his physical life: in no special sense did he lay down his physical life; and we are expressly told that God raised him from the dead by his *own* power, just as he will “raise us up.” It could not have been, therefore, his physical life that Christ referred to as having power to lay down and take up. This conclusion is very strongly confirmed by the correct rendering of the passage, “I lay down my life of myself; no man *took* [or hath taken] it from me.” Thus the life Christ referred to was one that he had already laid down, previous to the time of speaking. Those who deny the pre-existence would have great difficulty in explaining what life it was that Jesus laid down of himself and took up again (as it is certain he did not lay down nor take up his physical life); and why the verb should be in the past tense. We know

from scripture that this fallen state of sin is a condition of death; hence when Christ entered into it, he entered into death—he died; that he did enter into it is evident from the fact that he was made in all points like unto his brethren, even to being made sin and a curse, though he *did* no sin. Thus at his incarnation he made a great sacrifice and entered death, and this was *the* sacrifice and *the* death of the atonement.

We know also from the law that Christ was in a condition of death while here on earth, and that his death on the cross was *not* his sacrificial death. He represented while in the flesh the dead carcass of the sin-offering, and his crucifixion was the antitype of the burning of that carcass “without the camp.” We also know from the statement of the apostle that he was in a condition of corruption and death while here in the flesh, because he was raised from the dead, no more to return to corruption. We *know* that he did not see corruption while he was physically dead, hence it must have been during his earth-life that he was in the “bondage of corruption”; and this agrees with all the points above, and with the statement of the apostle in Heb. v. 7, that God saved Jesus “in the days of his flesh” *out* of death. It also agrees with the prophecy in Isa. liii. 9, that Christ made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his *deaths*, a statement that cannot be reconciled with his physical death alone. Thus the view suggested makes harmony in all its parts, and the three points established thereby are the pre-existence and the real sacrifice and the real death.

CHAPTER VI.

CHRIST'S DIVINITY AND HUMANITY.

HIS DIVINITY.

IF I err not, the word divinity is misused ; according to the creeds, Christ the Son is identical with God the Father ; Jesus is “the very unoriginated God,” the creeds say ; and this absurd and utterly incomprehensible dogma is called the doctrine of Christ’s *Divinity*. I think it should be the doctrine of Christ’s *Deity* ; the word divinity means *Godlike*ness ; *this* was Christ’s birthright. He is “the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of his person” ; this is the plain teaching of the Word ; but that Christ is absolutely the Deity himself is both unreasonable and unscriptural.

The divinity of Christ consists in this, — his perfect likeness to God. Jesus is the accomplishment of God’s creative work — a man created in the image and likeness of God, hence, “the perfect man” ; the first man so created ; hence, “the beginning, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence” (Col. i. 18) ; “the beginning of the creation of God” (Rev. iii. 14). In other words, Jesus is the first *finished* or perfected human being — the Son of God and Son of man. Not the eternal Son of God, which is nonsense, but

the Son of the eternal God. This was all Jesus ever claimed to be ; thus the disciples referred to him. The Father himself bears the same testimony ; as at his baptism, " This is my Son, the Beloved." Read the first chapter of Hebrews, and notice how the divinity of Christ is set forth ; he is *not* the Deity, but his *image*. " But," says one, " does not the Father call him God in verse eight ? " Yes, and the Father called Moses god (Ex. iv. 16 ; vii. 1) ; and others he calls gods (Psa. lxxxii. 6) ; but it is the Son still that is styled God. " Unto the *Son* he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever ; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom ; thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity, therefore God, even *thy* God, hath annointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Is there any intimation here that the Son, though he *is* addressed as God, is identical with the Father ? Certainly not ; just the opposite is plainly indicated. God is *his* God, as well as the God of his " fellows." So Jesus speaks, " I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God and your God." *Your* Father no less than *my* father ; *my* God as much as *your* God.

There are some passages of scripture that are supposed to teach the absolute Deity of Christ ; a few of these we will notice. I will not stop to consider 1 John v. 7, because that passage has long been known, and is now universally acknowledged to be spurious, and is omitted without comment from the new version.

The strongest passage urged to prove the absolute Deity of Christ is undoubtedly the first two verses of

the first chapter of John's gospel. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." By the term Word, Jesus is undoubtedly meant, and the declaration that the Word was God, seems to settle the question in the minds of many persons. Jesus was God; here is the direct, positive statement; what appeal can there be from this? Let us see. "The Word was God"; *i.e.* Jesus was God; what does that mean? what *might* it mean? It might mean that the two were identical, absolutely one; this is the view of orthodoxism; or it might mean that they were one in spirit, perfectly united in spirit and nature, one in purpose; no one would deny, I think, that this latter explanation might possibly be the correct one; to decide the question which view was correct we should have to examine other scripture. In regard to the first explanation I would say that, if in this passage it was intended that we should understand that God and the Word were identical — that Jesus was the Deity — it should have read, "The Word *is* God," instead of "*was* God": thus it appears to me. Again, the view that God and the Word are identical does not harmonize very well with the declaration, twice repeated, that "the Word was *with* God." If the Word and God are identical, one and the same being, they could not be with each other, for a being cannot properly be said to be with himself — the very language implies two beings. However, these objections to the established view might be successfully cleared away; but there are other scrip-

tures that fully indicate the exact nature of that union which subsists between the Father and the Son — not identity, but harmony. This is especially evident from the Saviour's prayer in John xvii. Christ prays that "they (his disciples) all may be one, *as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee*, that they all may be one in us; . . . that they may be one, *even as we are one*. I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." Now mark, — in whatever sense Christ and the Father are one, in that same sense are believers to be one with the Father and the Son. Let this point be especially noticed, for it settles the question. If it be insisted that Jesus Christ is one with the Father in the sense of being "the very un-originated God," then believers are to be one with God in the same sense; for Christ's prayer is "that they all may be one *even as we are one*." Thus it will be seen that we cannot take this extreme view of Christ's Deity without including believers in the same unity, and making them one with God in the same sense.

The meaning, then, is plain. Christ's divinity consists, not in identity with God, but likeness to him, and this is what he means when he says, "I and my Father are one"; and in this same sense shall his disciples be one with the Father and Son, — "that they all may be one, *even as we are one*."

Let us look at Christ's testimony concerning himself. He says, "I and my Father are one." Then the Jews took up stones to stone him. Jesus asked them why they stoned him. They answered, "Be-

cause that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." Here was the time, if ever, for Jesus to assert his Deity; if he *was* God now was the time to say it. What was his answer? "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said ye are gods? (Psa. lxxxii. 6) if he called them gods, say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said" — well, said what? That *he* was God? This is what we should expect from the drift of Christ's words, as though he had said, If God called *them* gods, do you call me a blasphemer because I say that *I* am God? But Jesus does not say this; he makes no such claim, but finishes the sentence with the simple words, "Because I said that I am the *Son* of God." This is all Christ ever claimed. He never said one word that indicated that he considered himself as the absolute Deity. He was one with the Father in spirit, in harmony, and the declaration thus understood is in perfect accord with another one — "My Father is greater than I."

In harmony, then, with the foregoing, I understand John's statement, "the Word was God," not in the sense of identity of person or being, but in identity of spirit and purpose; there was such a "unity of spirit" that the agent was said to be the principle. In the beginning God said, "Let *us* make man in *our* image." Christ has his part of the work to do in the creation of every man, for "all judgment is committed unto him"; hence "without him was not anything made [*i.e.* completely made, finished] that was made."

There are some other scriptures that are supposed to teach the absolute Deity of Christ; but none that cannot be easily harmonized with the foregoing view. There is one in Phil. ii. 6 that ought to be noticed perhaps, because it is misleading on account of a mistranslation. The common version seems to imply that Christ was "equal with God"; but the correct rendering teaches just the opposite. "He thought it not a thing to be grasped, to be on an equality with God" (see new version, text and margin). This passage is thus very strongly against the view of the absolute Deity of Christ.

Now let us inquire in what sense and to what degree is Christ divine or godlike? "In him all fulness dwells," "all the fulness of the godhood bodily." "In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," and in his face we behold "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God" (2 Cor. iv. 6). "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, *he* hath declared him." "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, and no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him." Thus does the full extent of Christ's divinity appear; he is the perfect image, likeness, and revelation of God; "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." So perfect is the harmony that we may say, "the Word was God"; and Jesus could say, "I and my Father are one." So exact is the likeness that Jesus could declare, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father also."

HIS HUMANITY.

Orthodoxism lays great stress upon the Deity of Christ; but it seems to me more important that we should comprehend his humanity. That the wonderful, sinless Jesus was divine I can easily believe; but was he *human*? I doubt not that he was like God; but was he like *man*? and if so, how, and in what respect, and to what extent? The common doctrine that Christ the Son is absolutely God the Father, is not only absurd, self-contradictory, and unscriptural, but it is confusing, misleading, and discouraging to the soul seeking after God. If Christ was the Deity, then how is he my pattern? how is his victory any encouragement to me? He was the Almighty, absolute controller of all forces; it was impossible for him to sin and he knew it; therefore his trial was no trial at all, and his triumph no encouragement to fallen man, since the circumstances of the two are in no way similar; man is the almost helpless football of the forces (mostly evil) around him; if Christ was God, then he was the master of all forces, and of course could be overcome by none; hence his moral triumph is no more encouraging to the sinner, than is the business success of a man who starts out with millions of money to begin with, any encouragement to the poor tradesman who begins with nothing. If Jesus Christ did not begin as low down as I am, then the fact that he made his way out of this horrible pit of corruption and death is no help to me; what I want to know most as a member of the fallen

race is, not how near Christ comes to God, but how near he comes to man. I want to know, of course, if he can reach *up* to God; but I want to know still more if he can reach *down* to me; in short, I want to know if he *was* man, "a brother born for adversity," a child *born*, as well as a Son given.

From the considerations presented in the last chapter, it is plainly apparent that Christ's trial was no farce; but a terrible reality, fraught with uncertainty and fear, just as our trial is to us. These considerations of themselves show how thoroughly Christ was human, how fully he entered into all the experiences of fallen man. We have also seen that in his incarnation, though there was the co-operation of God's creative power, yet Christ was human, "made of a woman," and brought into the world like every other human being. We have seen also that the life of Christ was one of suffering, deprivation, and loneliness; he was truly "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and in this respect again he was like fallen man. But now let us notice further, step by step, his nature and life, according to the Word, that we may note how in every particular and detail he was indeed the Son of *man*.

We may be sure from many and the plainest scriptures that Christ was really human, especially from Heb. ii. 14-18.

"Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he himself likewise took part of the same. . . . Whereof it behooved him [*i.e.* he was obliged] in all things to be made like unto his

brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."

Now in order to be like his brethren in all things, he began his earth life even lower down than Adam; the latter was created a son of God, an adult human being, with a sinless nature. Christ began his life a helpless babe, Son of fallen *man* as well as Son of God, with a sinful nature. Some perhaps will demur to the statement that Christ had a sinful nature; but such certainly is the positive teaching of scripture. He was "made sin"; he was not a *sinner*; on the contrary, he "knew no sin"; he was holy, harmless, undefiled"; how then was he made sin? By taking upon himself man's fallen nature; in no other way could he have been *made* sin; and this is still further confirmed by the fact that he was "made of woman." "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one" (Job xiv. 4). Furthermore, he was "in all points tempted like as we." How could he have thus been tempted if he had not had a sinful nature? He was *obliged* to be made like his brethren in all things; surely he would not have been like his brethren at all if he had had a sinless nature. Similar language is used of Christ as of the sons of fallen Adam. "Adam begat a son in his own likeness" (Gen. v. 3), the likeness of sinful man. So Christ "was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. ii. 7) "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. viii. 3).

Now see all this exemplified in his life. The Evangelist speaks of his childhood just as you might speak of the childhood of any human being. "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." His reputed father was poor, a laboring man; Jesus was subject to him, no doubt laboring with him, thus knowing the experience of the great army of earth's toilers. There was of course something about him remarkable and extraordinary, different from other boys; he was "filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him"; and yet there was nothing in this to prevent him from entering fully into all the experiences of the infancy, childhood, and youth of human kind.

Thus also in Christ's ministry we find the human element, rather than the divine, most prominent. In referring to himself, Christ almost always styles himself the Son of man; four times he calls himself the Son of God; eighty times he takes to himself the name, Son of *man*. He was weak and feeble as ever any poor mortal was. He says, "I can of mine own self do nothing" (see John v. 19, 30; viii. 28); was ever any one weaker than that? But perhaps some one says: "Did not Christ perform wonderful miracles? did he not cure all manner of diseases, cast out devils, command the elements, walk on the water, and raise the dead? were these the works of a poor, weak man?" No, these were the works of *God*; not Christ's works at all, but the works of God the Father. He empowered Christ; it was through God's power alone that Christ performed his mighty works.

God could empower you or I to do the same things if he pleased, and some *will* have this power ultimately even to do *greater* things than Christ did. (See John xiv. 12.) This position may seem strange and very erroneous to some who have not heretofore thought of this matter; I know that the common idea is that Christ performed his miracles by his own power. For instance, in a little theological work that now lies before me (which the ministers of a certain so called "evangelical" denomination are required to study), I read: "As man, Christ weeps over the grave of Lazarus; as God, he raises him from the dead. As man, he suffers and dies; as God, he raises his own body from the grave." Now I do not hesitate to affirm that nothing could be more unscriptural than this; in fact, it is just the opposite of the truth. Christ did *nothing* by his own power, — "the Son can do nothing of himself," — and we are told repeatedly that God raised Christ from the dead "*by his own power*" (1 Cor. vi. 14). Jesus never claimed to perform miracles or to do any work in his own name or by his own power; on the contrary, he expressly *disclaims* it. He did his mighty works "by the spirit of God" (Matt. xii. 28) or "by the finger of God" (Luke xi. 20), *i.e.* in plain language, by the *power* of God (compare Ex. viii. 19). The works that he did were *not* his own works (John ix. 4). The words he uttered were *not* his words (John iii. 34; xiv. 10; xvii. 8). "It is my meat and drink," he said, "to do my Father's will and to finish *his* work"; again he says, "The

Father that dwelleth in me, *he* doeth the works." Jesus always attributed his works to God; for instance, when he cured the demoniac, he says to him, "Return to thine own house and show how great things [not I, but] *God* hath done unto thee"; and the man went his way and published throughout the whole city how great things *Jesus* had done unto him. Jesus knew that it was God dwelling in him that did the work, and he thus speaks; the cured man knew nothing of God, but saw only Christ as the instrument of his salvation. All this is positive. Christ in himself was a weak, feeble man; what he did was by the power of God, just as God might empower any one to do a mighty work; thus, for instance, Paul speaks, "I labored more abundantly than they all, *yet not I* but the grace of God that was with me" (1 Cor. xv. 10); so Christ with equal truth might have said the same; Christ's very life was dependent upon God. We have already seen that Jesus was in a condition of death while here in the flesh; the only life he had was "of God," as he himself said: "I live by the father" (John vi. 57). In this respect also he was "like unto his brethren," who, while in this bondage of corruption, have no life in themselves, but are "*dead*," possessing only the "life hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3).

Now notice how this view that everything in Christ's career was of God is still further confirmed. Out of many passages that might be cited I will only refer to two. Acts ii. 22: "Jesus of Nazareth, a

man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you as ye yourselves also know." God did the miracles, wonders, and signs, by Christ. Again, see Acts x. 38-42. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy spirit and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were possessed of the devil, for God was with him; and we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they slew and hanged on a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead; and he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead." Notice how, in this passage, everything is attributed to God. He it was that anointed Jesus, who was able to do mighty deeds because "God was with him"; God raised him up from the dead, and chose the witnesses of his resurrection, and God has ordained him to be judge. Here, as everywhere else, we see that "All things are of God"; this was as true in relation to Jesus as to any other person. Jesus was as truly "God's workmanship" (Eph. ii. 10) as any other being. He was "the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. iii. 14), "the firstborn of every creature" (Col. i. 15); God was *his* Creator, God, and Father, just as he is *our* Creator, God, and Father. (See 1 Pet. iv. 19; John xx. 17.)

God brought him into the world (Heb. i. 6); his whole life and work was God-wrought, as we have seen; so his passion and crucifixion (Acts ii. 23; iv. 27, 28), his resurrection, exaltation, and priesthood (Acts ii. 24; Phil. ii. 9; Heb. vi. 20); his return to judge, and reign, and deliver the "whole creation" (Acts xvii. 31; Rom. ii. 16; Psa. ii. 8; Dan. vii. 13, 14; Rom. viii. 19-20) is all of God — *all of God*; and this is very wonderful and precious, and shows how fully Christ was identified with the race, how thoroughly he was human. He began on the same plane, and passed through the same process, — "made perfect through suffering" — that fallen man must pass through in order to reach perfection. So thoroughly was he human that he was under the *curse* (Gal. iii. 13), and had to be redeemed like the rest of mankind. (See Heb. ix. 11, 12.) "But Christ being come, . . . neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption." The addition of the words *for us* at the end of this passage in the common version, is an illustration of the process by which the translators, it would seem, sought to help out the meaning; but those words obscure the sense; Christ had first to obtain redemption for himself, before he could redeem others. God must first redeem *him*, by "saving him *out of death*" (Heb. v. 7, new version, margin) before *he* could redeem *us*. "All things are of God." He is the great, original Redeemer, redeeming Jesus, the world's Redeemer, that Jesus

might redeem the world; hence prophetically Jesus is represented as recognizing this fact when the Psalmist makes him say, as we know he *did*, at least partly say, "Into thine hand I commit my spirit; *thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth*" (Psa. xxxi. 5; compare Luke xxiii. 46).

And now we can answer another question that may be asked. If Christ began even lower than Adam, and was a poor, weak man with a fallen nature, how did *he* come off victorious in his trial, when Adam, though he seemed to have had a better opportunity, failed so utterly? The answer to this question is again, — "All things are of God." Why did Adam fail? Because it was God's plan that he *should* fail. Why did Christ succeed? Because it was God's plan that he *should* succeed; "the grace of God was upon him"; God "made known to him the ways of life" (Acts ii. 28). Take your Bible and turn to Isa. xlii. 1-12; read the whole passage carefully, comparing it with Matt. xii. 18-21, and see how thoroughly Christ's success was of God. God says by the prophet: "Behold my servant whom I uphold. I have put my spirit [power] upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. *He* shall not fail." Why? Because "I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people for a light of the Gentiles." What for? "To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the

prison house"; and then Jehovah adds, thus taking all this upon himself, "I am the Lord, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." Could language frame anything more positive to show that "God worketh all things after the counsel of his *own* will"? and that, too, in the career of his "only begotten Son," as much as in the life of any human being? As we have seen, his birth, trial, sufferings, and death were of God; so also his mighty works, — victory, exaltation, and glory. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief" (Isa. liii. 10); "it [also] pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell"; "he hath highly exalted him" (Col. i. 19; Phil. ii. 9). Verily, "all things are of God."

Jesus had to pass through a process of growth, instruction, and perfecting, just as man must, in order to reach the "image of God." "He *grew* in wisdom and in favor with God and man." There were some things he did not know (Mark xiii. 32), and he had to be instructed; among the rest he "*learned* obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. v. 8); he had to pass through a training process "that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb. ii. 17), and finally he was "*perfected* through suffering" (Heb. ii. 10), "and being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. v. 9).

Christ's final sufferings and death were those of a human being. He suffered as a martyr, just as other

martyrs have suffered before and since, *i.e.* so far as the giving up of his natural life was concerned. We have already seen that the life Jesus laid down and took up again, was not his earthly but his pre-existent life. His natural life was "taken" from him (see Acts viii. 33), just as the natural life has again and again been taken from other martyrs. He died voluntarily, to be sure, and yet he was "put to death" (1 Pet. iii. 18) "by wicked hands." Paul says "he was crucified through *weakness*" (2 Cor. xiii. 4). All this shows what a weak, feeble, human being Christ was *in himself*, though empowered of the Father to perform wonderful miracles; just as we are weak in ourselves, though "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." Christ's resurrection, we have seen, was of God, and it is also plain that he was raised as a man, — a man still even after he had been "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom i. 4); not now the "man of sorrows," with "marred visage," corruptible flesh, and fallen nature, but the restored, perfected man, "made perfect through suffering"; and yet he still was a man with flesh and bones (Luke xxiv. 39), eating and drinking with his disciples (Acts x. 41), and living in familiar intercourse with them for forty days. Then he ascended and was seated at God's right hand, still a man (Luke xxii. 69; Acts vii. 56), and one day he will come again, "this same Jesus" (Acts i. 11), that was with them during that forty days, "the man Christ Jesus"; as it is written, "The Son of man

shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works." Thus in his entire career Christ is most thoroughly identified in every particular and detail with fallen man; he is emphatically our "forerunner," having passed over, step by step, the same path that every son and daughter of the human race must tread to reach the likeness of God.

We will notice one more point which still further confirms the foregoing, and sets forth the wonderful and blessed relation that subsists between Christ and his own. The relation of Christ to his followers is that of a sample to the whole; in the Bible this relation is represented under the most striking figures. For example, Christ is the vine, *ye* are the branches. Christ is the elder brother, *ye* are the members of the same household. He is "the firstborn among *many* brethren." Christ "is the chief corner-stone" in the "building of God"; *ye* are "lively," or rather, "living stones" in the same building, built up a "spiritual house" "for an habitation of God through the spirit." Christ is the heavenly bridegroom, the church is the bride, "espoused as a chaste virgin unto him," and they twain are one. "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Eph. v. 32); and yet again Christ and believers are one body, of which he is the head and they are the members; "Ye are the body of Christ and members in particular" (1 Cor. xii. 27). Now if we carry out this last figure, we might reason that if Christ and believers constitute one body, then every member must

share in the same experience that every other member has, whether of sorrow or joy, pain or pleasure, humiliation or glory. This is, of course, the truth with reference to the members of the literal body, and according to the Word it is also the truth with reference to Christ's mystical body ; as it is written, "there should be no schism [or, margin, division] in the body ; but the members should have the same care one for another ; and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it ; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." Now the head of this mystical body is Christ, and if it be true that every member shares in the experience of every other member, then the head shares in the experience of all the members, and all the members share in the experience of the head. And this indeed is the wonderful truth that runs all through the New Testament. Believers are represented as passing through the same experiences, enduring the same sufferings, having the same promises and encouragements, and finally sharing in the same exaltation and glory as their Lord and Saviour. Whatever promise or declaration is made of Christ, either of suffering, dishonor, or humiliation, or of joy, honor, or glory, the same, or a similar promise or declaration, is made of his followers ; as Christ was "made in all things like unto his brethren," so his brethren are to be made in all things like unto him (1 John iii. 2). I have already given many proofs and illustrations of this truth. We have seen how, in the fullest sense, Jesus was made a "partaker of flesh and blood," *i.e.* of

human nature ; now I want to show how believers are made “partakers of the *divine* nature.” Every Christian understands that we must deny self, forsake all, and follow Jesus in his sufferings here, if we would share in his glory by and by. It is a precious thought that it is possible for us to know the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings (Phil. iii. 10). The period of “the sufferings of Christ” (1 Pet. i. 11) has not yet expired ; for the believer “fills up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ” (Col. i. 24), and “if one member suffers all the members [including the head] suffer with it.” As the members now suffer with the head, so the head still suffers with the members. In this view we may be able with Paul to “glory in tribulation,” “to take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake,” because thereby we are “made partakers of Christ’s sufferings,” that we may ultimately be “partakers of the glory that shall be revealed.” Suffering with Christ is a part of our calling ; “for even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps” ; and again Paul says, “Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.” Thus it is our privilege, a *gift* of God, to share with Christ in his humiliation and afflictions, and *if* we thus share with him, we shall also share in his honor and glory, and to as *full* an extent as Christ himself ; though this may seem almost too much to say, yet it is no more than is fully warranted by plain scripture.

Christ and believers are *perfected* by suffering (see Heb. ii. 10, with 1 Peter v. 10). Both are appointed to the same destiny. Is Jesus "a Son of God"? Believers are also sons; Jesus is "the first-born among *many* brethren," — one among "*many* sons." Is Jesus an "heir of God"? Believers are "*joint* heirs with him." Does there dwell in Christ all the fulness of the Godhead bodily? Believers are to be "filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph. iii. 19). Is Christ a Prophet, Priest, King, Judge, and Saviour? The saints share in all these offices (see Rev. i. 6; 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3; Ob. 21). Has Christ a throne and a kingdom? The saints share both (see Rev. iii. 21; Dan. vii. 18). Is Christ to rule and reign? The saints are to rule and reign with him (Rev. ii. 26, 27; xx. 4). Is Christ the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person? Believers are to be "like him" (1 John iii. 2). "We all with open face [face unveiled] beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the *same image*, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord." Is Christ divine? Believers shall also be "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4). "As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Is Christ holy, harmless, undefiled? We are to be made "partakers of his holiness" (Heb. xii. 10). Is Christ called God? So God's people receive the same lofty title, as we have already noticed. Is Christ *one* with God? Believers are to share in the same unity, of the same kind, and to the same extent, — "that they

all may be one even as we are one." Now all this is most wonderful and blessed, and plainly indicates how thoroughly believers are "made partakers of Christ" (Heb. iii. 14). Whatever he has been, is, or may be, they must be, are, and shall be; and oh, how near this great truth brings Christ to the believer! He is our elder brother, sharing with us and we with him in all the experiences of fallen man; and still mutually sharing in all the exaltation and glory of "the perfect man." Thus the divine Jesus imparts his divinity to the elect, — the promised "seed" — through whom the same divinity shall be transmitted unto "all the families of the earth," until there shall be a race divine, Godlike, — "and there shall be no more anything accursed."

There are certain respects in which Christ differs from the rest of mankind. As God makes one to differ from another (1 Cor. iv. 7), so he, and he alone, makes Jesus to differ from all the rest of his creation; not in his earthly condition, for in that respect he was made "like his brethren in all things," except, of course, that Christ was sinless; nor does he differ in his perfected state, for we too shall be made "partakers of the divine nature." But God hath made him to differ in *priority* and *rank*, for "He is *before* all things and in him all things hold together" (Col. i. 17, new version, margin). "He is the *head* over all things," "the *beginning*, the *firstborn* from the dead, that in all things he might have the *pre-eminence*." Therefore, "unto the Son, God saith, thy throne, O God, is for the age; a sceptre of

righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity, therefore *God*, even *thy* God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Thus does it appear that the pre-eminent *Son* is as much "of God," as are the "many sons"; all are "his workmanship," as it is written, "Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory unto the ages. Amen."

Is not all this most grand and precious? How encouraging and reassuring to every member of the race! In your struggle with trials, temptations, and sins, you may walk the same path as the Master. He was weak like you. "In the days of his flesh" he knew, as we do, what it was to "pray and supplicate with strong crying and tears," to realize himself in a "horrible pit" of corruption and death, and to be oppressed with "fear" and anxiety lest he should never escape therefrom; he has known, as every believer must know, what it is to endure, to fight, to weep, to pray, to suffer and toil, to agonize and plead as he did in the garden; in short, "to enter into the kingdom of heaven through much tribulation." Furthermore, he was on the same plain that we are, had to contend with the same things that we

do, had no more strength than we have, depended on the same almighty Being that we may, bore the same reproach and shame that we must, and all “for the *joy* that was set before him” “in bringing many sons unto glory,” just as Moses “chose to suffer affliction with the people of God” in order to lead them out of bondage, “because he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.” Thus Christ’s triumph is a pledge of our victory; his Father is our Father, his God is our God; his resources are all ours; “as he is so are we in the world”; Christ had no advantage over us; the same God who alone delivered him, “making known to him the ways of life,” “saving him *out of death*,” “holding his hand and *keeping* him,” has promised to deliver the whole creation from the bondage of corruption. “God was in Christ reconciling the *world* unto himself”; “he was the firstborn of *every* creature.” He is the pattern man of God’s finished creation, and the pledge and promise under God’s hand and seal (John vi. 27) of the final exaltation of *man* to dominion over “all things” (Heb. ii. 5–11). “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” “As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” “Therefore let no man glory in man [“but he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord”], for all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, — all are yours, and ye are Christ’s, and Christ

is God's "; and thus, blessed be the dear Father of all, we arrive again at the conclusion that "all things are of God." "We are his workmanship" (Eph. ii. 10). "He maketh all things" (Isa. xlv. 24), from Christ the *beginning* of his creation, to the last one delivered from the bondage of corruption. "For I am the first, and with the last, saith the Lord" (Isa. xli. 4).

CHAPTER VII.

THE ATONEMENT.

THE popular idea of the atonement as taught by orthodoxism, seems to me not only unscriptural, but unreasonable; this popular idea most awfully misrepresents God, distorts the truth of his Word into most ugly deformities, and totally obscures the great truth that Jesus Christ is the image and likeness of God, the most perfect revelation of the Father that we have. Instead of this great truth, Christ is represented in *contrast* with the Father; the latter, stern and inexorable; the former, tender, merciful, and loving.

The common idea is that Christ suffers and dies in man's stead to satisfy the justice of God, so that he can forgive and accept the sinner; thus Christ bears the penalty of sin in man's stead, pays man's debt, and, as a consequence of Christ's redemptive work, the Father pardons and restores the sinner, *if* he repent and believe. The above seems to me all wrong. Christ does not suffer in man's *stead*, but *with* him as his companion and associate—not to satisfy God's justice (what sort of justice is it that is satisfied with the sufferings of an innocent victim?), but to reveal his love. Christ does not bear the *penalty* of sin for man, but he bears the *sin* itself. "Behold

the Lamb of God that beareth away the sin of the world" (John i. 29, margin). "Who his own self bears our sins in his own body on the tree." Furthermore, the Father's mercy and love are not a consequence of Christ's redemptive work; but Christ's redemption is a consequence of the Father's mercy and love. It was God that made the atonement. "*God* was in Christ reconciling the world unto *himself*." "Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee, saith the Lord." Thus the atonement, like everything else, is "of God"; and this great truth of itself must necessarily change the entire aspect of the atonement as viewed by the majority of Christians. From the standpoint of this truth it can be seen at once that the notion of Christ's work being for the satisfying of God's justice, or to reconcile *him* to man, must be an error; it is God himself who makes the reconciliation; surely it would be absurd to conceive of God as reconciling *himself* — pacifying, appeasing, or propitiating *himself*; and yet this is just exactly the absurdity that creedal orthodoxism involves.

The two points for us to notice and keep in mind in our study of this doctrine, are, first, *love* was the motive power; and second, *God* was the prime mover. Any view that contradicts or obscures these two facts must be erroneous; a view that makes justice the prominent attribute in the atonement to the obscuration or compromising of God's love cannot be true; a view that exalts Christ as man's redeemer, and detracts from the character of God, thus putting the

two in contrast or opposition, must be utterly false. The following stanza illustrates this error.

“Jesus Christ, who stands between
Angry heaven and guilty man,
Undertakes to buy our peace;
Gives the covenant of grace.”

Think of the picture that this stanza conjures up. Jesus Christ standing between angry heaven and guilty man! Think of it! As though an angry God is only kept from pouncing upon guilty man by Jesus Christ standing between, holding him back with one hand while he extends the other in compassion and mercy toward the cowering sinner. Jesus reassures the latter by undertaking to *buy* a peace for him with the Father; that is, to purchase a reconciliation; and he it is — Jesus — who gives the covenant of grace. Is it not very plain that this is entirely wrong? is it not a gross misrepresentation of the attitude that the Father holds toward the sinner? A *Father*, indeed! What a misapplication of the name it would be if the view implied in the above stanza were the true one! Must the favor of a *Father* be bought? does Jesus give the covenant of grace? is it not “the grace of *God* that bringeth salvation unto all men” (Tit. ii. 11)? Is it any wonder that, thus misinstructed by the creeds and standards, the people should “perish for lack of knowledge”?

Right at this juncture I wish to offer a word in regard to this golden declaration of Holy Writ — God is love. It is quite the fashion with some severe

religionists to affect to be disgusted when anything is said in this line, and to declare that such views as the foregoing make out God to be like a weak, indulgent human parent, so soft and yielding as to let his children have their own way about everything, and never correct them; it is further declared that though it is true that God is love, it is also true that he is just, and that he will by no means clear the guilty, or forgive the impenitent, etc. To all this I would reply, first, by utterly disclaiming any intention of making out our heavenly Father to be weak and indulgent. I yield to no one in my estimation of God's righteous judgments, the absolute certainty of his retributions, and the utter impossibility of the escape of the guilty. God *is* just, and we may be sure that he will pay the strictest regard to that quality in his dealings with all his creatures. But mark you, nowhere in the Bible does it say, God is *justice*; but it does say God is love; the difference is just this: justice is an attribute of God, like righteousness, mercy, goodness, etc., but love is more than an attribute; it is his very substance — God *is* love — not simply lovely or loving or lovable, but love itself. This quality lies at the very basis of his character, and since "he cannot deny himself," every other quality and attribute is simply a manifestation of this. God's justice, or even his wrath, is a manifestation of his love; it must be so, for God *is* love, and whatsoever God *is* must always be manifest in whatever he *does*. Love, then, is the background and the basis of all God's works and ways — a "perfect love"

that "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, and never faileth" (1 Cor. xiii). Ah, what a love is the love of God! Our love is selfish, narrow, exclusive, weak, wavering, indulgent, sometimes even harmful and pernicious in its influence because of its blindness and lack of judgment, and ill-advised lavishness. But God's love is strong, unwavering, universal, righteous, just, and good. O rare love! a love that is always just; a love that is as broad as the universe; a love that will stop at nothing to accomplish the good of the one beloved; a love that chastises, corrects, inflicts pain and suffering, and stays not nor desists because of the complaints of the sufferer; a love that kills and makes alive (Deut. xxxii. 39), that wounds and makes whole (Job v. 18), that smites and binds up, that tears and heals (Hos. vi. 1), that even "turneth man to destruction and saith, return ye children of man"; a love that manifests itself when needed, in wrath and fierce anger, in fiery judgments and dire retributions; a love that is willing to remain unknown by the one beloved, that is willing to be misunderstood, maligned, and slandered; a love that will wait long years, centuries, millenniums, ages, for recognition, and yet is seeking all the time the good of its object; and that will find its full reward at last in simple reciprocation. This is the love that ruleth over all, and that will have its own way at last, for "love never faileth."

But if all this be true, how shall we understand such scripture as "he tasted death *for* every man,"

“the just for the unjust,” “he bore *our* sins,” “by his stripes we are healed,” etc.? All these scriptures are fulfilled by Christ as our associate and companion. Christ tasted death *for* every man, but not *instead* of him, for man himself must die; and in fact was already involved in the death (this fallen state) which Christ tasted. Is not the thought sweeter by far that Christ is our companion and associate, made in all points *like* his brethren, sharing with us in all our woes and troubles, rather than that he should bear a penalty and endure a burden in which we have no share, that we might escape that penalty and that burden altogether, he taking our punishment, and we going scathless? The rich, in the time of the war, when they were drafted, hired a substitute to take their place and go to the front; the substitute went to the war; the wealthy conscript stayed at home; the latter took his ease at home, away from the hardships and perils of the camp, the march, and the battle-field; the substitute went in his *stead*. Would it be pleasant to think of Christ as thus standing in our stead? To me it is a grander thought to think of Christ as my intimate companion, brother, friend, equal sharer in all our experiences. He knowing all my woes, I filling up that which is behind of his afflictions; he drinking of the same cup that I (in my measure) must drink of (Mark x. 39); I following him in all things here, that I may share with him in all things by and by.

For a further example read verses four and five of

the fifty-third of Isaiah; and then turn to Matt. viii. 16, 17, and see how the prophecy was fulfilled. Christ "bore our griefs and carried our sorrows" — not instead of us, that we might *not* bear them, but as a sympathizing companion and helper, delivering us from the death-load (Rom. vii. 24, 25) in God's "due season." Christ comes to deliver mankind, not because they are in *danger* of being lost, or in danger of suffering a "death that never dies," but because they are *already* lost and dead; and Jesus comes to "seek until he find them," and to give "life unto the world." "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"; and in accomplishing this great work, Jesus becomes one with us. "Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he likewise took part in the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Furthermore, let it be remembered that the *finished* work of redemption is made the *ground* of the invitation to the sinner to be reconciled to God. In the popular theology it is put the other way about; sinners are exhorted to repent in order that they *may* be redeemed; but Paul says that the world *has* been reconciled to God; God himself has accomplished the reconciling work, and it is *done*; "now then, we beseech you, be ye [as individuals] reconciled to God." Mark the situation: it is not that the sinner, either for himself or by some mediator and interces-

sor, must beg of God for pardon and salvation, but the work of redemption is done; the world is reconciled to God; and now God by his ambassadors *beseeches the sinner*—think of it! *He* pleads with the sinner, to be reconciled to himself. “Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ; as though *God* did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” Does that read in harmony with the view that God must be reconciled to man, propitiated and appeased and bought up, in order to make him willing to forgive and save the sinner?

But some one will perhaps ask at this point, “How then shall we understand those scriptures that speak of Christ as being the mediator and the propitiation for our sins, an advocate with the Father, etc.?” The answer to this question brings us to another division of our subject, viz. :

THE TERMINOLOGY OF THE ATONEMENT.

These terms are varied and quite numerous, such, for instance, as Atonement, Reconciliation, Salvation, Propitiation, Intercession, Mediator, Advocate, Redemption, Ransom, Purchased, and Bought. Much controversy has been waged over these terms, and there has been an immense amount of talk as to their true meaning and significance. I would say first that the investigation of *principles* is of much more importance than that of words; and when the principles of God’s economy plainly appear, we should not allow mere terms to shake our confidence therein;

let us interpret the terms in harmony with the principles, and not sacrifice principles for the sake of a rigid interpretation of terms. In my remarks thus far on this subject I have tried to point out principles — broad foundation truths upon which, if I err not, the redemptive work is based. In harmony with these we will study the terminology of this great subject and the formal statements of the Bible doctrine.

The word Atonement occurs only once in the New Testament,¹ in Rom. v. 11; in the new version it does not occur at all, but is changed in the above passage to reconciliation. The English word simply expresses the means whereby it is undertaken to bring two parties at variance into harmony, *i.e.* “to set them at *one*” (Acts vii. 26); this is the *at-one*-ment. In the Bible doctrine the atonement is the means whereby man is reconciled to God; since the enmity and alienation are all on the part of man, the atonement is entirely for his benefit; and this fact is clearly indicated in the original word; it means a thorough change, as from enmity to friendship; of course it can be seen at once that this *change* is entirely on man’s side; he is the one who is to change from enmity to friendship. God is not in a condition of enmity against man, but man is at enmity with God, and in order to establish harmony between the two something must be done (not to change God, but) to change man, and this is the atonement or reconciliation; the two words in the

¹ We will say a word on the atonement in the Old Testament later on.

New Testament are from the same original. The error, then, of speaking of God being reconciled to man must be apparent to all; it is man that must be reconciled to God — *changed* from enmity to friendship.

This truth is still further confirmed by a consideration of the word Propitiation. The original word means to appease, soothe, conciliate; in Rom. iii. 25 the apostle declares that God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation. Who is the object and what is the purpose of this propitiation? Surely God has not set forth Christ to propitiate *himself*; man is the one to be soothed, conciliated, appeased. That this is so is made certain by the use of this same word in Heb. ix. 5, where it is translated mercy-seat. Who is the mercy-seat for, God or man? To ask the question is to answer it. Christ is *man's* mercy-seat, or propitiation; the mercy-seat is for man's benefit solely; and yet according to the popular view the mercy-seat ought to be for God's benefit; for according to this view God is the one to be propitiated, appeased, conciliated, and since the propitiation *is* the mercy-seat, it would follow that the mercy-seat was for God; but that cannot be; the mercy-seat is solely and entirely for man. The very fact that the propitiation is the mercy-seat shows that it must be for man's benefit. "He is the propitiation [or mercy-seat] for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world."

These considerations bring us to another term, viz. Intercession. It is commonly supposed that Christ has to plead with God and intercede in behalf of

sinful man, implying that God is more or less unwilling, and that it requires considerable importunity to move him favorably toward the sinner.

Now what is the truth in regard to this word? The original word means simply to meet with, converse with, have dealings with. In Acts xxv. 24 the same word is rendered "dealt"; from this it will be seen that the word itself has no such theological meaning as is commonly attached to it. Now what kind of dealings does Christ have with the Father on man's behalf? Our answer to this question will depend on our idea of God; if we entertain the idea taught in the popular theology, we shall think of Christ as pleading with a stern and obdurate ruler, to soften his austerity and to enlist his mercy in the sinner's behalf. I do not say that the creeds put it in this way in so many words, but this is the idea implied, and practically the belief of the great mass of those who accept the creeds. For example, a prominent evangelist, who has travelled all over the country and been invited to all the great churches, and has been very successful, as success goes in that occupation, was in the habit of telling the sinners in his audiences that "if Christ were taken out of the way, if he should cease his intercessions but for one moment, in that moment they would sink into an endless hell under God's wrath and curse." Is it not dreadful that God should be thus maligned? Would it not be blasphemous if it were intentional? At least, is it not a prodigious error to thus place in the most glaring contrast with God (to his utter misrep-

resentation) him who is the brightness of his glory and the *express image* of his person?

He that knoweth God (Jer. ix. 23, 24) will have no such idea as the above of the "dealings" that the Son has with the Father on man's behalf. The need of an intercessor is not because God must be plead with to make him willing to pardon the sinner, but that man needs encouragement in coming to God; the knowledge that *we* have a friend at court is for our comfort and encouragement; the Father himself loves us (John xvi. 27); but that is the last thing that we will believe; and to help us to see that blessed truth, Christ is given as a go-between to "manifest" (1 John iv. 9) the Father's love; not that the Father without such a go-between would love us less or be less gracious and merciful, but we need him to introduce us to God. This is the exact sense of Eph. ii. 18 and iii. 12. "For through him [Christ] we both [Jew and Gentile] have access [*i.e.* an introduction] by one spirit unto the Father." Rotherham renders it "introduction." Such in truth is the effect of Christ's intercessions.

This brings us to two more terms in connection with this subject, viz. Mediator and Advocate. Christ as mediator comes *to* the sinner, takes him by the hand, and *leads* him to the Father; as advocate, he *helps* him after that he has come. The original word means *helper*. God's ineffable glory and absolute holiness repels sinful man, and he never can believe that such a God loves him. So a mediator comes in between to reveal that love—the

Man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. ii. 5). We “come unto God *by him*, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us” (Heb. vii. 25). He is our advocate (helper) with the Father; not that the Father needs a helper, but man needs one; hence God “hath laid *help* upon one that is *mighty*” (Psalm lxxxix. 19), — “mighty to *save*,” — and thus we who sometimes were far off are made nigh in the blood [life] of Christ.” The expression, “an advocate with the *Father*,” is very strange from the standpoint of orthodoxism. The common theological idea of an advocate is the legal one, a pleader with God, to propitiate his favor; and yet he is the *Father*! an advocate with the *Father*! Surely, if God is a Father in deed and in truth, there needs no one to plead before him the cause of his children; if the child has become estranged from the Father for a long time, and has become hardened by a vicious life and debauched by sin, *he* may need some one to help him back again to his Father, and to make known to him the Father’s love, still unchanged, and his ready willingness to welcome him back again to his heart and home; here is work for a mediator or helper, but all for the benefit of the one estranged and alienated, not for him who *never* changed.

Let us now inquire into the use of the words Redemption, Ransom, Purchased, and Bought. “Redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.” “He gave himself a ransom for all.” “Purchased with his own blood.” “Ye are bought with a price.” What do these statements mean? What is the true signifi-

cance of this commercial aspect of the atonement? The common idea is that man is redeemed, ransomed, purchased, and bought from a cruel bondage by a price paid down to his master, and there is truth in all this; but we must be careful how we apply the various parts of this idea. Who is the master? and what is the price? Fallen man is indeed a slave in cruel bondage; this is certainly scriptural; but a slave to who or to what? He is a slave to *sin* (John viii. 34; Rom. vi. 16); or, if you please, a slave to Satan, since Satan is the embodiment of sin. How then is he redeemed? is there a price paid to Satan? is he bought from the devil? Nothing of the kind; he is redeemed from sin, but not by paying a price to sin, or to the devil, but by making a sacrifice, which sacrifice *is* the ransom whereby man is delivered from the bondage of corruption. God makes the sacrifice, "God in Christ" (Jesus is the Lamb of *God* that taketh away the sin of the world). We have seen what that sacrifice was, when Jesus left the riches and glory which he had with the Father — laid off the "form of God," and "took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of sinful man" (Phil. ii. 6, 7; compare Rom. viii. 3), and by this sacrifice redeemed, ransomed, purchased, and bought the race; bought by the precious blood of Christ. Blood is a symbol of life (Deut. xii. 23), and it was the life of Christ that was the ransom. "He came to give his life a ransom for many," — not his earth life, but the life he had with the Father before the world was; the life he had already laid

down when he was here "in the flesh." Jesus did not pay over a price to any one; but he made a great sacrifice, which is the price, or the ransom, whereby man is redeemed.

Now all this is fully illustrated by the type of Moses redeeming the children of Israel from Egypt. Moses is a type of Christ (Acts iii. 22); and in Acts vii. 35 he is said to be a "deliverer," or redeemer; the original word comes from the same stem as the word rendered "ransom" in Matt. xx. 28, and as the word rendered "redeem" in 1 Pet. i. 18. Thus we see that Moses was a redeemer or ransomer; he ransomed the children of Israel from their Egyptian bondage. Now how did he ransom them, and what was the ransom price paid? No money or anything of that kind was paid to the Egyptians whereby they were induced to let Israel go; and yet a ransom was paid; what was it? It was the *sacrifice* that Moses made in order to become their redeemer and deliverer; it was the *life* he gave up as the son of the king's daughter, a prince of the house of the Pharaohs, to be identified with an enslaved, degraded people, that he might redeem them from their cruel bondage. Here is the entire work of redemption in type; thus did Moses redeem, ransom, purchase, and buy this people, and was faithful over *his* house as a servant, as Christ was faithful over *his* house as a Son (Heb. iii.). So Christ left the royal courts of his Father, the riches and the glory — gave up *that* life, made the sacrifice, and thereby redeemed, ransomed, purchased, and bought the race with

his own precious blood [life]; it was not a commercial operation; the payment, and consequent absolute forfeiture of a certain price to a definite person, in exchange for which man is handed over to Jesus Christ as his new owner; such a view as this will lead us into all sorts of errors; for we shall be searching round for the price that Jesus paid — the life he gave and never took back again, and for the one to whom the price was paid, etc. Some have an idea that this price was paid to the devil; others that it was paid to God; at any rate —

“Jesus paid it all, all the debt I owe,” and the payment was to “satisfy God’s justice” and reconcile him to man; and thus I owe my salvation to Jesus, and to him alone; for if the debt of justice is paid, then I owe God nothing; thus Jesus is my Redeemer and friend; but God is a hard creditor, a very Shylock, who *must* have his bond before he will release the debtor. This is all a great mistake; surely no one can fail of seeing how utterly wrong this view must be. The price paid for man’s redemption is Christ’s sacrifice; the price is paid to no one, but is simply a sacrifice *made*, — a life laid down, — just as a mother might sacrifice herself for her child, or a friend for a friend; “but *God* commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet enemies Christ died for us”; and thus we are “redeemed, not with silver and gold, but by the precious blood of Jesus as of a Lamb [the Lamb of *God*] without spot or blemish.”

THE ATONEMENT AS TYPIFIED IN THE LAW.

We will now notice how the foregoing view is confirmed by the typical presentation of the atonement in the law.

“For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices, which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect; for then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins; but in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sin every year; for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins; wherefore, when he [Jesus] cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me; in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure; then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God” (Heb. x. 1-7).

Here is Paul’s comment on the typical character of the law of the atonement; it was a shadow—only a shadow, not the very image—of good things to come; those good things began to be realized when Christ came to do God’s will; then the *real* purpose of the atonement began to appear; Paul indicates that real purpose as being to “take away sins” which the blood of bulls and of goats could *not* do.

A full account of the ceremonies of the atonement day will be found in Lev. xvi. I shall not attempt

to apply all the details of this type, but only call attention to a few points in confirmation of that view of the atonement already presented.

The first fact I would call attention to is, that there is nothing in all this legal ceremony of the *penalty* of sin. In the popular doctrine of the atonement, the great effort is to show how the sinner may escape the penalty of sin. We have already noticed that this is not the object of the atonement, — to save the sinner from the penalty of sin, — but to save him from sin itself; and this view is fully confirmed by the type in which the penalty for sin is not referred to at all. There is not in the law the least hint or the most distant reference to the idea that the atonement was a means whereby the children of Israel were to be freed from the penalty of the broken law, or released from any merited punishment; if this is the purpose of the atonement as taught in the New Testament, then it is surely a most remarkable thing that there is not the slightest allusion to any such thing in the typical atonement under the law.

What, then, was the purpose of the atonement under the law? Just exactly what it is under the gospel — to put away *sin*. We are distinctly told that the bullock and the two goats were a *sin* offering; that is to say, they represented the sin that was to be put away; they did not represent the penalty, nor did they represent a substitute who was to receive the penalty in the place of the sinner; neither were they an offering to appease the one sinned against, but they represented the sin itself that was

to be slain, destroyed, and put away. Both animals, the "Lord's goat" and the "scapegoat," were one sin offering, and the way each was treated shows how God deals with sin. The Lord's goat is slain, its blood is shed, and the carcass burned "without the camp"; thus it is utterly destroyed; this shows how sin is dealt with on God's part; it is put out of existence — so thoroughly pardoned that it becomes as though it had never been, and the sinner is accepted as though he had always been sinless; no offering but the sin offering was thus utterly destroyed; portions were reserved for food, etc.; but the sin offering was to be slain, its blood poured out, and the carcass, "together with the skin, the flesh, and the dung," was to be burned without the camp. All this prefigures how God deals with sin. It is destroyed, utterly and forever. The Lord says, "I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions *for mine own sake*, and will not remember thy sins"; and again, "Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more forever." Thus God forgives and utterly annihilates the sin so far as he himself is concerned; it is gone, abolished, consigned to eternal oblivion; this forgiveness has nothing to do with the *punishment* for sin; *that* may still be inflicted, because it is for the good of the offender; as all of God's chastisements are for his creature's good; but the sin itself is destroyed, "cast behind his back" (Isa. xxxviii. 17). We have a very striking illustration of all this in the life of King David, in connection with the great sin that he committed of adultery and murder (2 Sam. xii).

Nathan the prophet comes in to tell him of his sin, for up to that time he seems to have been strangely oblivious to the enormity of his transgression; Nathan relates the story of the rich man and his poor neighbor; and when David's indignation and resentment is aroused against the former, Nathan turns upon him with the startling words, "Thou art the man"; those words tear away the mask, and David, the base adulterer and murderer, stands revealed — himself to himself; but with this shameful and humiliating self-knowledge comes a sense of contrition and deep sorrow for his dreadful sin, and with this feeling strong upon him he murmurs, "I have sinned." Quickly, as the mouthpiece of the Lord, Nathan responds, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin." There, that was the end of it on the Lord's part, so far as the sin itself was concerned; no more was said about it; it was never flung in his face again; he was never reminded of it; the enormity of the sin did not prevent its instantaneous pardon, and when pardoned it was "put away," as though it had never been committed. David himself did not get over it so easily; God forgave him instantaneously and perfectly; but it was a long time, if ever, before David could forgive himself; this is apparent from some of the Psalms that he afterwards wrote (see especially the fifty-first); his deep humiliation and self-accusings are expressed by the words, "I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me." Nor did he escape the penalty of his transgression; bitterly did he suffer in his person and

in his family; but the sin itself, on God's part, had been entirely "put away." Such is the perfect, thorough, and absolute forgiveness of God. "He will *abundantly* pardon." Well may we exclaim, in view of such divine graciousness and infinite magnanimity: "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion on us; he will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."

Such, if I err not, is the typical significance of "the Lord's goat" in the atonement.

But forgiveness is not enough to effect a thorough reconciliation between man and God. The offended one may freely pardon, but while the offender feels the burden of his guilt, while he is still conscious of his baseness and degradation, he cannot feel comfortable, or happy, or at rest; it is not enough that the offended one should forgive and forget the offence; the offending one must be *delivered* from his guilt; he must be separated from his sin, so to speak; its weight must be lifted from him; the incubus removed, and thus delivered from himself, as it were, he is able to emerge from the gloomy depths of guilt and shame in which his self-consciousness involves him, out into the sunshine of God's grace and love; this is *man* reconciled to *God*.

Now all this is prefigured in the scapegoat. Let it be remembered that the sin offering represented the

sin. Sin is the victim that is to be slain and destroyed. A sin offering thus viewed as representing the sin of the offerer — surcharged, as it were, with sin — was considered an unclean thing, and the carcass, after that the blood had been poured out at the altar, was to be burned without the camp as an unholy thing, unfit to come into the midst of God's people; and the person who performed this office of disposing of the dead carcass of the sin offering was himself unclean, and must remain so for a certain time before he could return into the camp. Thus the sin offering, representing the sin itself, was looked upon as polluted and polluting. This fact is brought out in all the sin offerings, but especially in connection with the scapegoat.

The Hebrew word rendered scapegoat is “Azazel” (see margin of Lev. xvi. 8), which literally means *avert*. The scapegoat was the averter; he averted or warded off calamity by bearing away the sins of the people. The only possible cause of suffering in God's universe is sin; when sin is put away — when we are separated therefrom — then all calamity is averted, because all possible cause of calamity is removed. This was the function of this second goat of the sin offering; hence it was called the averter.

“And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess upon him all the iniquities of the children of Israel and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness; and the goat

shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited."

Here is the type: is it not plain that the scapegoat represented the *sin* of the people, and that what was done with the scapegoat represents what will ultimately be done with sin? Bear in mind that the scapegoat was only another phase of one and the same sin offering; the Lord's goat was slain, representing the Lord's abundant pardon, and his attitude of perfect forgiveness and entire forgetfulness of the sin; the scapegoat was loaded down with the sin of the people and then let loose in the wilderness, "into a land not inhabited," thus bearing away the sins of the people and separating them therefrom. So sin will be destroyed and man delivered therefrom by the great antitypical atonement through Jesus Christ. Now see how perfectly the antitype corresponds to the type.

Christ is the antitype of the entire sin offering; and we read that "the Lord hath made the iniquity of us all to meet on him" (Isa. liii. 6, margin), just as it did upon the head of the scapegoat.

"He bare the sin of many."

"Behold the Lamb of God that beareth away the sin of the world" (John i. 29, margin).

"Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many."

"Who his own self bear our sins in his own body on the tree."

He did not bear the *penalty* of our sins — our punishment — as our substitute; but he bore our *sins*; in

him they were destroyed; by him they were put away. "He was made SIN for us." How strange is this statement! He was not made a sinner or sinful; this could not be done without destroying his character as the spotless Lamb of God; but he was made *sin* and a *curse* (Gal. iii. 13), and as an accursed and unholy thing, a "body of death," he passed "the days of his flesh," and finally suffered without the gate, as the antitype of the dead carcass of the sin offering (Heb. xiii. 11-13). Thus was Christ made sin; thus is God's judgment on sin exhibited and his attitude toward the sinner set forth; thus is man's deliverance from sin prefigured and his reconciliation to God fully secured.

CHAPTER VIII.

“WHAT IS MAN?”

THIS question is so important that it is five times asked in the Bible. First in the book of Job vii. 17, — “What is man, that thou shouldst magnify, and that thou shouldst set thine heart upon him?” Again in Job xv. 14, — “What is man, that he should be clean, and he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?” Also in Psa. viii. 4, — “What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” Again in Psa. cxliv. 3, — “Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him, or the son of man, that thou makest account of him?” Finally in Heb. ii. 6, the same as in Psa. viii. 4. A question so oft repeated in Holy Writ is doubtless important; what is the significance of this question, why is it asked, and what is the answer?

If we should answer the question according to a matter-of-fact view of the actual condition of things in the world to-day we should say that man, considered as a whole, is a poor, miserable creature; he appears to be a failure, a wretched abortion; he is a beast of burden, an oppressed slave, a toiling, ill-requited, down-trodden bond-servant, ignorant, godless, corrupt, and wicked. I speak of the masses; of course we should judge of the race by the majority;

take mankind as a whole, civilized, heathen, barbarous, and savage, and the above description is not so dark as the reality. Here is a brief presentation of this point from the new book "Ecce Venit," by Dr. Gordon of Boston: "Unless one is completely in the spell of a delusive optimism, he must often be appalled in contemplating the condition of the world. A thousand millions of the race still strangers to any form of Christianity; two-thirds of nominal Christendom lapsed into an apostasy hardly better than paganism; and of the remaining third, only a meagre proportion really spiritual disciples! Without, the whole world lying in the wicked one; and within, perpetual corruptions of doctrine, constant estrangements from the faith, daily reprisals of the prince of darkness upon the domain of light." This picture is not overdrawn; it is not painted too dark; it exactly expresses the truth, and is in perfect accordance with the scripture which saith that "darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people"; and again, "the whole world lieth in wickedness."

If you would see a word picture of man's degraded condition drawn out in all its awful hideousness by an inspired pen, read the first chapter of Romans; also Rom. iii. 9-19, margin. This is the answer to the question, What is man? from the standpoint of matter of fact, and this is in harmony with the answer given in the Bible. "Man is like to vanity; his days are as a shadow that passeth away" (Psa. cxliv. 4).

But if this is a truthful presentation of the general condition of man, how does this fact affect the charac-

ter of God, man's Creator; it certainly seems to reflect discredit and impute dishonor to his name. Man is represented in the Bible to be the crowning glory of God's creation. He is made only a little lower than the angels; he is crowned with glory and honor, and is given dominion over the works of God's hands (Psa. viii.); thus is he represented; but the reality does not bear out the representation. Man's period of innocence and uprightness was very short apparently; upon the very first opportunity he sinned, and so "fell," was driven from the garden, excluded from the tree of life, and sent forth a vagrant upon the face of the earth. The first man born of human parents was a murderer. Enoch walked with God three hundred years; but while he was thus living in most blessed communion with his Maker, the world was growing more and more corrupt, ripening for that dread visitation of God's wrath which in the days of Noah was to swallow up the race. When the flood came, the earth was filled with corruption and violence, and every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually; out of that generation the number fit to be preserved in the ark was very small; and God even speaks as though Noah was the only one in that generation who could be called righteous (Gen. vii. 1); and the Lord even goes so far as to declare that it repented him that he had made man. Does not all this wretched failure seem to reflect discredit upon God? To say nothing of man's responsibility and guilt, does it not seem that the outcome of God's original creation, and the first

sixteen hundred years of man's trial, showed a lack somehow, and a failure or a blunder on the part of the Creator? And yet the history of that first sixteen hundred years has simply been repeated over and over again ever since; man's way has ever been downward; *failure* is stamped upon all his works and ways. What a striking illustration we have of this in the history of the Israelites! Think how much was laid out upon them in order to make something of them. What a splendid chance they had! What promises, what blessings, what wonderful works God wrought out in their behalf! They were God's "peculiar treasure," his special people; and how did they turn out? Their history is one long, uninterrupted, unmitigated *failure*; until finally they filled up the measure of their cup of iniquity by crucifying their own Messiah, and were cut off and cast aside as a dead and withered branch. And now I ask again how does this failure look from God's standpoint? To say nothing of Israel's guilt (and they became worse and more guilty even than the surrounding heathen nations, Ezek. xvi. 44-52), does it not look as though the Creator had made a great failure? He was their Father, their King, their Maker, and their Husband (Isa. liv. 5), their Shepherd and Great Deliverer. He bore them on eagle's wings, he comforted them as a mother, he rejoiced over them as a bridegroom over his bride, he supported them as a staff; he seemingly lavished all the resources of heaven upon them, and apparently did his utmost to make something grand and noble and good of

them, and after all — shall we say he failed? Does it not look so? It certainly does; it appears as though God tried to make something extra of this people, and instead of succeeding the result was that they were worse than the surrounding heathen nations. Was not God dishonored by this failure? It certainly appears so, and he acknowledges it as we have already noticed. Suppose you take the children of Israel as a fair sample of the race, and ask the question, What is man? and take their history as an answer; certainly, the answer would seem to be anything but creditable either to man or to his Maker. The history of Israel is the history of the world; every nation has walked in the same downward path; the nations of antiquity have perished in their own corruption, and modern nations seem to be travelling the same way. In the light of these facts it is certainly a very humiliating answer that we have to give to the question, What is man?

Let us now consider the scriptural answer to this question as given in Psa. viii. "What is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet."

The above answer does not seem to be borne out by matter of fact, as we have already seen; or must we conclude that this description simply applies to man as he was originally created, but that he has fallen

from that high estate to become the wretched, miserable creature that we see him to-day? No; this scripture is a faithful description of man as he *will* be when *finished*. That this view is the correct one is made plainly apparent by the comment on this scripture in the second chapter of Hebrews.

“For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak; but one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than [or, margin, a little while inferior to] the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet; for in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him; but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”

In the above passage it will be seen that Psa. viii. is quoted with comments and explanation. The statement that all things are put in subjection under man is accepted in its full force, and even strengthened by the comment that, “in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him.” Then the apparent untruthfulness of this statement is explained, and the fulfilment of it is thrown forward into the future by the next clause, — “But now we see *not yet* all things put under him.” This clause

is a full explanation of the apparently untruthful statements in regard to man, and is also a confirmation of the principle stated and applied in chap. iv., viz. that of *mystic prophecy*, or God speaking of things that are not as though they were (Rom. iv. 17). The passage in Psa. viii. is a mystic prophecy; it reads as though it referred to something in the past; and so understood it seems to contradict facts, for at no time in the past history of the race would this description apply to *man* as a whole. But this passage in Hebrews makes all plain,—“we see *not yet* all things put under man.” In Psa. viii. the Lord is speaking of things that are not as though they were, just as when he said to childless Abraham, “A father of many nations *have* I made thee.” This is a very important and instructive point, and should be noticed especially for two reasons. It fully confirms the principle noticed above; that is, the principle of mystic prophecy, or God speaking of things that are not as though they were; a principle that will be found to throw light on many a dark place of scripture. The illustration of this principle given in chap. iv. might be doubted on the ground that we have no scriptural authority for applying it to the first account of the creation; but no such objection can be brought to the above illustration; in this case the apostle applies the principle himself; for after quoting the prophecy just as we find it in the Old Testament, and even making it stronger, as we have noticed, he plainly indicates how it is to be understood by the clause, “But now we see not yet all things put under

him"; that is to say, although the Lord speaks as though the action were in the past, yet the language is prophetic, and its fulfilment in the future.

Furthermore, this scripture assures us that man is not on the downward, but on the upward path. The truth is not that man *was* created perfect and given universal dominion, and that having fallen, the best that God can do now is to save a portion of the race; but man is in *process* of creation; he has "*not yet*" reached perfection; he is still unfinished, crude, and rough, and "the perfect day" is not in the past, but in the future; the race is not going *from* perfection, but *towards* it. It makes a great deal of difference whether we look backward or forward for the "perfect man." This passage in Hebrews points us *forward*. Thank God for it! *Man* — the race — is yet to be crowned with glory and honor, and set over the works of God's hands, and all things put in subjection under him; the perfection of the race is yet in the future, and *it will be accomplished*; for in the mystic prophecy quoted, the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it; and he hath spoken of it in such a way as to make assurance double sure; for when the Lord delivers himself in this style, calling those things that be not as though they were, he speaks as "the Almighty God" (Gen. xvii. 1), and his word is absolutely sure; for "God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it, or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Hence, so sure is it that man shall ultimately become the

master of God's creation, that God speaks of it as already *done*; and as a further pledge thereof the apostle points us to Jesus.

But now we see not yet all things put under *man*, but we see *Jesus*. Well, what of that? Jesus was pure, immaculate, unsinning. It is right that all things should be put in subjection under *him*. But what has that to do with corrupt, fallen, sinful man? Just this: *Jesus is the pattern man of God's finished creation*. He is the sample, the standard, the model after whom all the rest are to be fashioned; hence the significance of these three words — we see Jesus. Not yet is the *race* perfected; not yet are all things put under man; but we see Jesus; *he* is finished, perfected, completed, and this fact is the assurance and pledge of the ultimate perfection of the race. Let not the reader fail to catch the deep significance and universal sweep of this passage; it is of the highest importance, and gloriously satisfactory. Let us go over it again briefly.

Unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak, but he hath put *that* world in subjection under man. But is man worthy of such a trust? is he fit for it? Yes; for he is God's masterpiece, the crowning glory of his creation; for only a little while was he made lower than the angels; the Lord has crowned him with glory and honor, has set him over the works of his hands, and all things has he put in subjection under him. But how can you speak thus of man? poor fallen, degraded man? He is not such a being; nor

is he in any such condition as is here described ; nor has there ever been a time when this description would apply to *man*—the race. Oh, but this description does not apply to any past condition of things, but it is a prophecy of the future ; we see *not yet* all things put under man. Ah, how shall I know, then, that man ever *will* reach such a glorious and exalted condition? How can I believe it, in view of man's past failure and his present degradation? Why, look at Jesus! Has he not been through the whole process of creation and reached perfection? We see *him* crowned with glory and honor, and his triumph is the promise and the pledge of the final deliverance of "the whole creation." "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons into glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings ; for both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are *all of one* ; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." Thus Jesus is the great representative man,—the forerunner, the beginning, the firstfruit ; and "if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy ; and if the root be holy, so are the branches."

This view gives Christ his proper place in the economy of God. He is "the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. iii. 14), in that he is the first human being finished, perfected ; as such he becomes the pattern and model of the race ; so that when it is asked, What is man? it is perfectly proper to point to Jesus as the answer, because he is the only man that

has thus far been finished. Suppose a mechanic is making a great many machines; he has a vast amount of raw material on hand; some of the machines are partly made, and they lie about the factory in endless confusion apparently, and in all stages of completion; you enter and look around bewildered; you can see no order or plan, and you ask, "What are you trying to do here? what are you making?" "Come with me," says the master, and he takes you to a room by itself and shows you one of the machines completed, in perfect operation, turning out the intended product. "There," says the master, "that is what I'm making," and he proceeds to explain; the master shows you a specimen of his *finished* work when you ask him of his craft. Just in the same way and for the same reason the apostle points to Christ, when the question is asked, What is man? "Looking unto Jesus," we can see what man *will* be when finished.

How blessed and encouraging is all this! Sad, indeed, would be the prospect of man's future from his own standpoint; but taking Jesus as the pattern of the finished man, we may look forward with a perfect hope to the future—to the time when all things in heaven and in earth shall be gathered together in him. The Lord says by the prophet, "I will make MAN more precious than fine gold; even A COMMON MAN than the golden wedge of Ophir" (Isa. xiii. 12; Young). We may well believe this since Jesus is the model. We have seen what man is now, and we know of how little account a common man, a

single individual, is in the world; but the Lord says, "I will make man [mankind, the race] more precious than fine gold; even a common man [each single individual] than the golden wedge of Ophir." "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment; and A MAN shall be an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

This is spoken of the finished man; we have not reached that state yet; that which is perfect has not yet come. Man as yet is only passing through one stage of his creation; like the frog that first must be a tadpole, and have an existence as such before it can develop into the perfect animal; like the butterfly that must first be an unsightly grub. So man is yet in the grub condition,—a mere tadpole, unfinished, crude, and in the rough. There *are* no men as yet; there never *have* been any except "that Man" (Acts xvii. 31) whom God the Father sealed and sent into the world, making him "perfect through sufferings," and thereby "the *beginning* of the creation of God."

CHAPTER IX.

FREE WILL.

To much that has already been presented in this volume it might be objected that, according to these views, man is a mere machine, a puppet in the hands of God,—an automaton moving only as he is moved. In answer to such a possible objection, and in the further elucidation of the subject of man's creation, we should study the subject of man's free will to determine, if we may, wherein he is free and responsible and to what extent. Such a study involves the doctrine of man's so-called

FREE MORAL AGENCY.

This phrase is not a scriptural one, but it is supposed that the idea it represents *is* scriptural; *i.e.* man *is* a free moral agent; in fact, it is generally supposed that the absolute freedom of man must be admitted, or else his responsibility is destroyed altogether, and, as already intimated, he is reduced to an automaton.

An agent is an actor, one who is able to act; a *free* agent is one who can act as he pleases, without any restraint; a free *moral* agent is one who is free to act as he pleases on all moral questions; *i.e.* all questions involving the qualities of right and wrong. Now I

do not hesitate to declare that, in the ordinary acceptation of the phrase, man is *not* a free moral agent; he is not free to *act* as he pleases, but rather is it true that man's actions are *entirely* under God's control. We will give abundance of Bible proof of this presently, but now I hasten to say that although the above is most certainly true, yet it does not follow therefrom that man is a machine, with no freedom or responsibility at all. The simple truth, if I err not, is that man's freedom inheres, not in his actions, but in his volitions; he is a free moral *chooser*, but not a free moral *actor*. Abundance of proof of this has already been presented in preceding chapters. God worketh *all* things after the counsel of his *own* will. We have seen how true this is, and yet it could not be true if man had power to act contrary to the will of God or in spite of his will. If the reader will stop and think a moment, he will perceive that God must have a controlling influence over man's actions, or else he could not work all things after the counsel of his own will; it would not be true that "of him and through him and to him are all things." But we have seen that these scriptures are true, thoroughly and absolutely true; hence man is not a free agent, but his will is free; he may propose and choose as he pleases, but God controls the outward act. Now let us notice some scriptural illustrations of this point.

Take the case related in Acts xxiii. The Jews were bitterly incensed against Paul, and determined to kill him. So bent upon his destruction were they

that more than forty of them banded together under a great curse that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed him. I do not know whether these wicked Jews kept their oath or not, but if they did they starved to death, for they never killed the apostle. They were murderers in the sight of God, just as much as though they had committed the deed; but he would not allow them to carry their wicked purpose into action. The very night on which these forty Jews had formed their murderous purpose, the Lord had stood by the apostle and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul, for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also in Rome." God's word was thus passed to the apostle, assuring him that he had no immediate cause for alarm, and mapping out his future service. Would God allow forty Jews to thwart his purpose, or cause his word to fail? No; nor forty million of them. Paul is delivered, and God's word comes to pass, as is written, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." But why did not God interfere to save Paul's life later on from wicked Nero? Because the apostle's work was done then and he could glorify God in such a death. Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy from a Roman dungeon, while awaiting execution, in which he exclaims, "I am now *ready* to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good fight; I have kept the faith; I have *finished* my course; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." Thus God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

“Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder thou wilt restrain.” The wrath of those forty Jews, God restrained, because at that time the death of Paul would not have been to God’s praise; but the wrath of Nero was allowed to fully vent itself, because then Paul’s mission was accomplished, and by his death (as by his life) he could then glorify God. Man may purpose or determine what he pleases, and *as* he purposes so is he judged. “For that he hated knowledge and did not *choose* the fear of the Lord, therefore shall he eat of the fruit of his own way and be filled with his own devices.”

Now let us notice further how clearly this view is set forth in the Book of Proverbs. “The ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.” “A man’s heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps.” “There are many devices in a man’s heart, nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.” Now mark the next passage. “Man’s goings are of the Lord; how can a man, then, understand his own way?” Again, “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of water he turneth it whithersoever he will.” And finally, we have the whole doctrine in a single sentence, — “The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.” This is a scriptural version of the old maxim, “Man proposes, but God disposes,” and this is just exactly the truth. The lot is cast into the lap; you have your choice; you may plan and purpose as you please, “*but the whole disposing thereof is*

of the Lord." Do not forget that. God may allow you to carry out your purposes and plans and he may not; it all depends upon whether he can overrule it for good and work it into *his* plans; for "surely the wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder [what he cannot overrule to his praise] he will restrain."

There are two other passages in this same line that we will notice (Psa. xxxvii. 23, 24). I have read this passage many times, and in former years taken it for a text, laying great stress upon the word "good." "The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the Lord." It is only of late years that I noticed, while reading Dr. Young's translation of the Old Testament, that the word "good" is not in the original. This is also indicated in our common version by that word being in italics. The passage is general, not particular: "The steps of a man [any man, all men] are ordered by the Lord." Young renders it thus: "From Jehovah are the steps of a man; they [his steps] have been prepared, and his way he [*i.e.* God] desireth; when he falleth he is not cast down, for Jehovah is sustaining his hand." Man goes the way that *God* desireth; his steps have been prepared beforehand and are all ordered of the Lord. This passage is in perfect harmony with those quoted above from the Book of Proverbs.

I will call attention to one more passage to the same effect (Jer. x. 23). "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Young renders it, "I

have known, O Jehovah, that not of man is his way, not of man the going and establishing of his steps."

Is it not plain, is it not absolutely certain from these scriptures, that man is *not* a free agent (actor)? A man's ways are "of the Lord," let him be or do what he may. "A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps." Mankind are God's tools and weapons; the wicked are his sword (Psa. xvii. 13). He uses them as the carpenter uses his axe and saw (Isa. x. 15). "He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Thank God for the knowledge! With such a God one may rest assured under the shadow of his wing. Not a sparrow falls, not a hair of thine head shall be touched, not an event transpires, not a dog shall move his tongue (Ex. xi. 7), but according to the will of the Almighty. Man may choose and plan and purpose, and he will be judged accordingly;—filled with his own devices—but his way, his outward acts are entirely under God's control. This is the Bible doctrine of man's free will, and thus is man's responsibility and God's sovereignty reconciled.

But this is not the whole doctrine of man's freedom. It goes further and penetrates deeper than this. If man has the power as intimated in the foregoing to oppose his will against God (although God controls his acts), how do we know but that some may be opposed to God through all eternity? And if so, then God will *not* be able to subdue all things unto himself, and to reconcile all things in heaven and earth to his Son. In this case some may stand

before God, hardened and incorrigible, defiant and unyielding, forever. He will never be able to subdue their stubborn wills, and even though he may crush them, still they will be unconquered. Is it so? or will God be able, literally and absolutely, to subdue all things unto himself, and reconcile all things, so that at last he will be "all in all"? Unless this latter view is the truth, then it would seem that God fails; his resources are inadequate; the provision for man's recovery is not "much more" (Rom. v.), but less than enough to undo the effects of the fall.

The question is this: Will God be able to induce all men ultimately to voluntarily *choose* "the good part"? Without invading their freedom, as explained above, will God be able to bring all into harmony with himself, so that at last every knee shall bow and every tongue shall give praise to God (Rom. xiv. 11)? I most certainly believe that he will, and for the reasons following.

In the first place, the scriptures quoted in abundance both in this chapter and in former chapters, necessarily imply that God will ultimately subdue all things unto himself; for how otherwise could he work all things after the counsel of his own will? No human will will be able to withstand the divine will. He will find a way to conquer every heart.

But perhaps some one will say that at this rate man's freedom is destroyed altogether; according to this idea not only man's acts, but his will also, is under God's control, so that he has no liberty at all. It might appear to be so at first thought, but two

considerations make it plain how God will be able to influence every will in harmony with his own, and yet invade no man's freedom. First, the eternal fitness of things. Man will voluntarily choose the right at last, because he was made *for* the right in the first place, and to suppose that he will remain eternally wrong, is to suppose that God's creation will fail of reaching the end intended, a position that would involve the failure of the Creator rather than the creature. As the fish was made for the water, and the bird for the air, so man was made for God, — God's life is his proper element — godlikeness is the end for which he was created, and he will reach that end as sure as God's word and work never fails. Man will be brought at last to *choose* the right because it *is* right, and he will *see* that it is right, and that the right is *best*. This will be brought about by the enlightening power of God; it is written that "all shall know the Lord"; now the great mass of the world are in ignorance — "darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people"; but the time will come when "the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the seas," when the kingdom is the Lord's and he is the governor among the nations. When man is thus enlightened to know the Lord he will know the right; and knowing it, he will choose it of his own free will.

There is an objection to this argument drawn from the analogy of nature; it is said that a vast number of individuals in God's creation fail of reaching perfection; they perish at some stage of their development

and never reach maturity. Hence it is alleged that it is not strange, nor at all out of keeping with God's ways, if some individuals of the human race fall short of perfection. To this objection I would reply first, that the above argument does not depend on the rule that all God's creatures reach maturity, but that they all answer the end of their creation, which is a very different thing. Judging from observation (and in the absence of any revelation on this point, this is all we have to judge from), we should say that it is not God's purpose that every individual of the lower orders of creation should reach maturity; whether they live an hour or a day, or perish in the germ, they accomplish the end of their creation; they fill the niche in God's economy that he intended; the countless seeds that fall to the ground and never germinate, tending only to enrich the soil for other plants, fulfil their mission in God's economy just as surely and truly as do the comparatively few that grow and bear blossom and fruit. But with man, the crown of God's creation, it is different. God's purpose in regard to him is revealed, and revealed in such a way as to make it sure that in respect to him God will most surely carry out that purpose. That purpose we have already fully considered; it is to create him, the race, in God's own image and likeness; and the language in which this purpose is set forth is of such an absolute and universal character as to fully indicate that the last and the lowest will finally be gathered. "I am the first, and with the last, saith the Lord." You cannot reason by analogy

from the lower animals to man; you might reason thus from a protozoa to a lion or an eagle: but when you pass from the highest of the brute creation to man, you must vault infinity, for man is a moral being, his era is eternity, his destiny is the image of God.

The other consideration that helps us to understand how God will be able to conquer and subdue every stubborn will and yet not invade man's freedom, is that though man is free, as has been explained, yet he is not independent; he is the creature of circumstances; he is beset on every side by influences that *determine* his will, and often against his desires and inclinations; every one knows that this is simply matter of fact; in other words, we might truthfully say that man's will is under the control of *motives*; it is turned hither and thither by the various motives that arise from our circumstances and surroundings; it might not be correct to say that man ever does anything against his will; for whatever he does, even though it were to deliver up his purse to a highwayman, the volition must precede the act — he *wills* to do it before he does it; but he does many things contrary to his desires, contrary to his intentions and his original plan; that is, he yields to the strongest motive; if a man presents a loaded pistol to your head and demands your money or your life, you give up your money actuated by the motive of self-preservation. Perhaps one will say that this is mere brute force, for you have no other alternative but to give up your valuables or die; this

is true, and I would not be understood as presenting this as an illustration of God's influence over the will ; but only as an illustration of the fact that one is swayed by powerful motives to do many things contrary to his own wishes and inclinations, and under circumstances, too, where we would not say that he was forced, but that he had choice of several alternatives. Such experiences are very common in the life of each and all ; for example, a poor man works for half wages to support his family, when his inclinations would lead him to resist the injustice and to refuse to work at starvation prices ; here again you might say he is forced, and in a sense it is true ; but strictly speaking he is not forced, but has the choice of other possible alternatives ; and is it not true that in a greater or less degree our will is forced continually by all-powerful motives arising from surrounding circumstances ? Take the following incident as another illustration. A stage-driver in Montana, on a bitter cold day in winter, had for his only passengers over a long stage a mother and infant child ; the road was blocked with snow, the vehicle could proceed but slowly, and the driver at last began to fear that the woman would be frozen ; she seemed to be sinking into a lethargy that he knew would be fatal, and at last he persuaded her to alight from the stage and walk, in order to start the sluggish blood ; still clinging to her babe she got out upon the bleak road and wearily struggled on behind ; at last, completely overcome by the piercing cold, she sank upon the snow and refused to move ; the driver, him-

self suffering intensely, could not move her, and what to do he knew not; at length a thought struck him, and quickly he put it into execution; snatching the baby from her clinging arms, he rushed to the stage, sprang upon the box, and started up his team; the mother was roused by the apparent peril of her child, she started to her feet, and hastened in pursuit; on she struggled, frantic with fear, nerved with a superhuman strength to fight for her offspring; the driver kept on until the woman had run quite a distance, then he stopped, restored the babe, helped the woman into the coach, and proceeded on his way; the woman was warmed up by the exertion and her life was saved. This incident illustrates how God can influence the will of man to induce him to choose the good part. Seizing upon the resources at his command, the driver was enabled to present to that mother a motive so powerful as to overshadow all other considerations, and induce her to do what was best for herself and child; he did not force her to the exertion that saved her life, but simply presented an all-powerful motive, and thus controlled her will. Now is it not likely, nay, is it not certain, that, in the process of creation, God has resources at his command sufficient to bring about, soon or later, an analogous result in the case of every human being? That is, he will be able to present to each one motives strong enough to induce them to voluntarily choose the right.

God must be supreme in the realm of motive causes; it must be that he is able to present more

powerful motives for the right than any that can be presented for the wrong; and since man's will is controlled by motives, God has thus the means whereby he will be able to subdue every human will unto his own, and that too, without invading its freedom. We have a perfect example and illustration of all this in the

CONVERSION OF PAUL.

Judging from the facts in the case, we can scarcely imagine a more unlikely thing, humanly speaking, than the conversion of this same apostle; every circumstance that would make such an event unlikely was present in his case. His ancestry and birth; his training and education; his religion, the most rigid of Phariseeism; all his prejudices and all his worldly interests, — *every* circumstance and consideration connected with him were all utterly against the idea of his ever becoming a follower of the despised Nazarene. The conversion to Christianity of Colonel Ingersoll to-day would not begin to be so unlikely as the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, the bitter persecutor, to that hated religion. It was not that he was an uncommonly wicked man, or an infidel or atheist, but he was iron-clad with prejudice and self-righteousness; with his will set like adamant against the new religion, and a determination as rigid as steel to stamp it out and annihilate it; and to make his case still more hopeless from a human standpoint, in all this he thought he was doing God's service, he was utterly blinded and deceived. Surely Simon Magus might become

a Christian, but Saul of Tarsus, never ! The extreme unlikeliness of his conversion is still further shown in the fact that after the event, the disciples would not believe that he was converted, but seemed to fear some treachery, some deep laid scheme to entrap and destroy them. And yet this same Saul of Tarsus was transformed in a moment, as it were, from the wilful, proud, bitter persecutor, to the mild, suffering, obedient servant of the Lord. From "breathing out threatening and slaughter" *against* Christ and his followers, to "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—seems a vast distance morally; and yet Paul traversed that distance in a moment. One glance at the Lord whom he had been persecuting was enough to sweep away all his Jewish prejudices, all his hatred, pride, and self-righteousness; he became humble, submissive, and obedient; ready to lay down his life for the sake of the cause that, up to that time, he had done all in his power to overthrow. It was a most wonderful transformation. How was it accomplished? Simply by opening his eyes to see the truth. The light that deprived him for a time of his natural sight, gave to him a spiritual discernment that changed the whole course of his life in a moment. Did he not choose the good part voluntarily? Certainly he did; and yet did not God in a most wonderful and effectual manner influence his will? It almost seems that the apostle's will was forced, and yet of course it was not. The whole thing was "of God," and yet Paul was free. Paul realized how thoroughly his conversion was of God, for he says in

his letter to the Galatians, "*When it pleased God* who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me that I might preach him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." When it pleases God the work is done ; no obstacle, physical or moral or mental, can stay his hand ; his council shall stand and he will do all his pleasure.

We are apt to think the apostle's case was exceptional ; that the Lord brought to bear upon him an unusual influence in order to so speedily convert him. But if this were true it would show that God was a respecter of persons, and that he showed Paul a favor that he withholds from other sinners ; moreover, such conversion would be equivalent to a conversion per force ; for if Paul was converted by an unusual demonstration of power on the part of God, without which he would not have yielded, then it follows that Paul did not voluntarily yield, but was compelled by the extra pressure of the power and grace of God ; and finally, and more serious than all the rest, such a view would make God directly responsible for all opposition to his will ; for if he could thus so speedily break down and subdue the iron will of Saul of Tarsus, then he could do the same in the case of every sinner ; and if he does *not* do it, he is responsible for their opposition to him ; for if he chose, he could transform them at once, as he did the apostle, from bitter enemies to humble servants of the cross of Christ.

We are not, however, left to conjecture on this

point; we *know* that Paul's case was not exceptional, but on the contrary it was a "*pattern*" case unto all those who should thereafter believe; this the apostle tells us in so many words in 1 Tim. i. 16. The conclusion from this case is inevitable. *God will never lack resources whereby to subdue every stubborn will*; not by invading their freedom, but by presenting a motive so powerful that the will yields to it at once. So it was with Saul of Tarsus. He had many and strong reasons for fighting against the cause of Christ; and yet, as a matter of fact, the reasons for his espousing that cause were infinitely more mighty, inasmuch as they pertained to the "spiritual man," while the former reasons were merely part and parcel of "this corruptible." Now when Paul was made to *see* this, the true state of the case, he immediately *chose* the right way. All that was needed to set him right was to open his eyes to *see* the truth, and to give him power to embrace it. Paul describes his case exactly in Phil. iii. 4-14. First he speaks of those worldly considerations — his high birth, bright prospects, blameless character, etc. — which might have been counted "*gain*" to him in temporal things; but all these he counted "*loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord*"; "*for whom,*" continues the apostle, "*I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith; that I may know him, and the*

power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made comformable unto his death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead"; and a little further he declares, "this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Is it not plain what were the motives that led the apostle to turn about so quickly? and were not these motives amply sufficient? do they not fully account for his sudden conversion? would such motives as these fail in the case of any one, if only they could fully realize them? will not every son and daughter of the race choose life rather than death, when they fully understand the true circumstances of the case? Surely man's free will is no obstacle in the way of universal restitution, since the very laws of his being invariably lead him to decide in favor of the weightiest motive; and surely the Almighty can present stronger motives to every person to right living than can be advanced for the wrong; and that he *will* bring every man under the influence of such motives — giving them the necessary light to apprehend the motives and the moral power to act in accordance therewith — is certainly scriptural and is assured to us also on the grounds of reason and justice.

Especially does the conversion of Paul, as a "*pattern*" case give us the above assurance. He was "the chief of sinners," and a "pattern to them who should afterward believe." Some have thought that

he exaggerates when he calls himself the chief of sinners ; but I cannot think so ; to me the statement is sober literal fact, albeit some may misapprehend the apostle's meaning. He does not mean that he was the most wicked man that ever lived ; he was not the chief of sinners in this sense ; but he was chief in that he was one of the hardest kind of sinners to reach ; encased as he was in prejudice and self-righteousness, and utterly deceived in his work, he was as hard a case for God to deal with as it was possible to produce ; and in this sense he was the chief of sinners ; and yet the Lord had no difficulty in turning him about, forthwith ; and this was a pattern case. Will any one then withstand God forever ? will there be incorrigible ones whom he *cannot* subdue ? Nay, verily ; he will be fully "able even to subdue all things unto himself," so that "every knee shall bow and every tongue shall give praise to God."

CHAPTER X.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL.

THERE is probably no subject in all the range of religious thought so difficult to deal with as this problem of evil. It seems a mystery dark and deep, with absolutely no solution attainable by mortal man. When I was a young man, together with a number of young men, joining the ministry, one of the members of a committee before which we had to appear, put to us this question: "Can you reconcile the character of God — his justice, wisdom, and love — with the *fact* that, having created man as he did, susceptible to temptation, and liable to fall, he yet allowed evil to assail him, well knowing what the result would be — misery, wretchedness, and death, upon the entire race; and in the case of some, everlasting torment?" We all acknowledged that we could not do it, and we waited with great interest for an explanation of the difficulty from our venerable interlocutor when, to our surprise and disappointment, he acknowledged his own utter inability to solve the problem, and no other member of the committee could throw any light upon it; they all concurred in the view that it was all an inexplicable mystery that could not be understood by mortal man. This is really the condition of the great mass

of the Christian church. Volumes have been written, there have been oceans of talk, and yet the dark problem of evil is unsolved. The question of the *origin* of evil has been the one with which theologians have principally wrestled; to imagine some way whereby evil might have first come into existence, and yet clear God from the tremendous responsibility of its creation, has been the great effort of those who have written on this subject; and yet it seems to me that the mere fact of the *existence* of evil, whatever may have been its origin, is the real difficulty after all.

The question proposed by the eminent divine to the young preachers, as already related, is the one we want answered. How can we reconcile the existence of evil — the tremendous and awful fact of its bare existence — with the fact of the existence of a God of infinite power, wisdom, and love? Why does God allow evil to exist at all? How can he, pure and holy and all-loving, — how can he endure the presence of this interloper (if it be an interloper) in his universe for a moment? And if he does allow its existence, and endure its presence, is he not in some sense responsible for the consequences? Or, do you say that God cannot or will not abolish evil; that, having established or permitted a certain condition of things, he will not interpose his power to change it, for in so doing he would have to interfere with man's free will? The subject of man's freedom we have already considered, and have found that while man is indeed free relatively and within

certain limits, he is not absolutely independent, by any means, but is fully in God's hands and under his control, so that there is no doubt about God's being able to subdue him at last to his will. Furthermore, whatever condition of things obtains, God must be responsible for it in the first place, or, what amounts to the same thing, responsible for that chain of causes that led to this condition of things. If God cannot change this evil state for the better, then he is not supreme; if he will not, then is he not all-loving, *unless* he has a purpose in this evil, that in its fulfilment will redound to his glory and his creatures' good. Did not God permit evil to enter the world in the first place when he might have prevented it? We certainly must say yes, for to deny it would impeach the divine attributes and detract from his godhood; in fact, it would dethrone him, and leave the universe without a supreme head. If, then, God permitted evil when he might have prevented it, then surely, in some sense, he is responsible for all the consequences flowing therefrom, and the only way we can vindicate him is by taking the ground that God has a purpose in evil that in the end will be all good.

We have already seen in past chapters that God *is* responsible, and that he *does* bring good out of evil. An absolutely supreme God is a universally responsible God, and such is the clear, plain, positive teachings of scripture, as we have seen. To this universal responsibility, evil is no exception, but rather a specially designated feature, inasmuch as God declares himself to be its creator.

“I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace and create evil: I the Lord do all these things” (Isa. xlv. 7).

Here is the statement: “I create evil: I the Lord.” He takes the responsibility. Does not this settle the question of the origin of evil?

Of course I know how this passage is disposed of by those who are afraid to take God at his word. It is said that not moral evil is meant, but evil in the shape of calamities and chastisements sent as the punishment of sin. This explanation, however, appears to me like a mere makeshift. The word rendered “evil” in this passage is the usual one, in the original, used throughout the Old Testament hundreds of times to denote wickedness and wrongdoing; and we have no reason, so far as the language is concerned, to give it any other meaning here; and let it be noticed that the particular evil referred to here is *war*, as is clearly shown by the context; it is God that girds Cyrus, his “anointed,” for the conflict and makes him victorious. Now war is *not* a physical evil, but always comes as a consequence of wrong-doing; war results from sin, corruption, deceit, oppression, ambition, hatred, revenge, and every other wicked passion; and yet it is one of the forms of evil growing out of God’s creation. Furthermore, what will we do with that strange passage in Amos iii. 6, — “Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?” Here it is certainly intimated that God is responsible for the evil done; here is the declaration, and coming direct from head-

quarters too, as the first verse indicates, "Hear the word that the Lord hath spoken." This passage is even more strange and startling than the other. What! does the prophet mean to intimate that whatever evil is done in the city, the Lord does it? That is the way the passage reads, though I confess it is hard to accept the statement. I would suggest a comparison of this passage with Gen. xxxix. 22, in order to get some idea of its possible meaning.

I would add that the distinction made between physical evil and moral evil, seems to me to be a delusion and a snare. Does not all evil have a moral quality? Is there any other kind of evil except moral? Is an earthquake, for instance, an evil in itself? Not so; any more than a storm is an evil; either the one or the other may cause harm or injury, but they are not evils in themselves. Evil is the outcome of something wrong, always and everywhere, and yet God says, "I create *evil*." Must we not consider *that* question settled? and turn our attention to the consideration of that other question —

THE PURPOSE OF EVIL.

If it be true that God is the creator of evil, as the scriptures declare, then it must be that he has created it for a *good* purpose, and the conclusion would seem to follow, that *all* evil, under the controlling and guiding hand of God, must result in good finally. I say this conclusion seems to follow from the foregoing considerations, and if this con-

clusion is correct, then it certainly would account for the existence of evil, and would fully vindicate God as its creator. That this conclusion is correct, I am convinced, and the reasons for that conviction I will now give the reader.

The subjects already considered, especially that "All things are of God," will help us to understand the one in hand. I have given several examples of how God has overruled evil for good; as, for instance, in the case of Joseph. Now if God has done this in *some* cases, and if, as we know, "he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," then surely it is not difficult to believe that he overrules *all* evil for good. In fact, this must be so, for it is only on this ground, viz. that all evil tends to good in the end, that we can reconcile the existence of evil at all with the existence of a God of infinite power, wisdom, and love. We may not be able to see *how*, in each individual case, evil is overruled for good; but we can easily believe that it *is* so overruled, when once the *principle* is established that God *does* overrule evil for good; and this we can do the more readily, when we come to understand some of the good ends to which evil conduces, and thus come to know something of the purpose of evil; and when we see, furthermore, that this purpose is grand and glorious, and in perfect harmony with the character of God, and that it fully accounts for the existence of evil.

1. Evil gives occasion for those conditions and circumstances whereby God is able to *reveal* himself

to man. To know God is everything; it is "life eternal" (John xvii.). Again and again the Lord declares, by the mouth of his servants, that the great purpose of his dealings with mankind is "that they may *know* me" (*e.g.* Ex. vii. 5; viii. 22; Ezek. xx. 25, 26; xxxviii. 16), and the crowning distinction of the millennial age is that "all shall know the Lord." "The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

Now how could God reveal himself in all his fulness to man without the conditions and circumstances that are occasioned by evil? How could God ever reveal himself to man in his mercy, long-suffering, and compassion, if it had not been that evil had placed us in a position to call for the exercise of these attributes in our behalf? And especially, how could God manifest to us his *love* in all its intensity and greatness except by such an opportunity as evil furnishes? As it is written, "In this was *manifested* the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him." There could have been no such *manifestation* of the Father's love if there had been no such thing as evil. We might believe that a friend loved us, even though his love had never been especially tested; but we never could fully appreciate his love unless circumstances should transpire to give him an opportunity to *exhibit* it in all its strength and fulness. Likewise, we never could have understood the love of God, and hence never could have known him, for God is love (1 John iv. 7, 8),

had it not been for our lost and wretched condition furnishing the Father with an adequate opportunity for its manifestation. It was "when we were without strength" that Christ died for us. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." It was because we were in such an evil case, sinners and without strength, that the love that brought deliverance is so marked and readily appreciated. Hence, again we read, "Hereby *perceive* we the love of God, because Christ laid down his life for us." How could we ever have *perceived* that love in all its rich plenitude if we had never come under the power of evil, so as to need this extreme manifestation of it? Surely it must be plain that without the opportunity that evil affords, God could never have fully revealed himself to man.

2. Furthermore, as evil gives God occasion to reveal himself to us so that we may *know* him, so it gives *us* the opportunity to exercise the attributes of God so that we may become *like* him. The presence of evil in the world gives the child of God the opportunity for the exercise of the godlike attributes of mercy, compassion, forgiveness, forbearance, meekness, patience, gentleness (Psa. xviii. 35) ; and thus he becomes like God ; for if ye do these things "ye shall be the children of the highest ; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust, and is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." In a sinless world man would have no opportunity to exercise these attri-

butes ; there would be no occasion for their exercise ; hence there would be no chance to become like God in these respects. Is it not clear, then, that the presence of evil in the world gives God occasion to reveal himself to man, and gives man the opportunity to become like God ?

These considerations also account for another very strange condition of things in this world ; that is, the injustice and inequality that obtains. The innocent and helpless suffer most keenly on account of the viciousness and brutality of others, and thus the most outrageous injustice is perpetrated continually ; moreover, the blessings of life seem to be very unequally distributed ; some have a superabundance ; others lack the very necessities of life ; the few seem to be actually surfeited with worldly prosperity at the expense of the masses. Now how can such a condition be tolerated in the dominions of a God of absolute justice — a God that considereth the poor, and is the friend of the fatherless and the widow ? The answer to this (at least a *partial* answer) is the consideration presented, viz. that God's children may become *like* him. “ All things are for your sakes ; that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.”

Suppose that we lived in a world of absolute justice, where no one suffered except what they strictly deserved to suffer ; where the innocent never suffered, but only the guilty, and they suffered just so much, no more and no less, as was due to their transgression, and would be beneficial to the transgressor.

Suppose we lived in such a world as that; at first thought it would seem to be a very nice kind of a world. But how could we, in such a world, develop the godlike attributes of pity, mercy, compassion, charity, and gentleness? There would be no room for heavenly compassion and sweet charity in a world of absolute justice; we would not be likely to pity very much a person whom we knew was receiving only the punishment due his fault, and that in the end would be for his benefit and blessing. Is it not plain that just this *kind* of evil, *i.e.* the evil of injustice, is needed in order that those crowning attributes of God, the tender and loving qualities of our Father in heaven, may be developed and perfected in his human children? Furthermore, so far as the injustice goes, *that* may be only temporary and apparent. Who shall say that in the future cycles which God's plan has yet to run, all the apparent injustice of this present time may not be taken into account, perfectly adjusted, and made right? We may well believe that it will be so when we are assured that "the crooked *shall* be made straight, and the rough places plain, and the glory of God [which is his *goodness*; see Ex. xxxiii. 18, 19] shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."

3. But in addition to the above considerations we have the direct testimony of scripture that evil is one of God's ministers of good. It is clearly intimated again and again that God uses evil for the accomplishment of his plans, which, of course, are always good. See, for example, Judges ix. 23: read the

context, and you will see that Abimelech, by a most atrocious crime, had obtained the rulership of Israel, and to punish him "God sent an evil spirit between him and the men of Shechem," and the result was the punishment of all the guilty parties. Is not evil God's servant, and does he not use it to carry out his own plans? See the same thought brought out in 1 Sam. xvi. 14: "The spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." This evil spirit was just as much "from the Lord" as was the good spirit. See also 1 Kings xxii. 23, where the Lord is represented as employing "a lying spirit," to deceive wicked Ahab to his own destruction.

The case of Job is one of the most striking and perfect illustrations of this wonderful truth. The Lord speaks of him as "My servant Job, — there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil." Thus it appears that Job was a remarkably good man, and this is confirmed by Ezek. xiv. 14, 20. Now then, what does God do but deliberately hand over this "perfect and upright man" into the hands of Satan, to do his worst upon him, only that he should not touch his life. How could we have a more perfect illustration of how God uses evil as an instrument for good? For although Job suffered intensely, we know that in the end he was greatly blessed by his hard and bitter experience. If God thus uses Satan, the embodiment of evil, as a minister for good in the case of one individual, is it hard to believe

that all evil is overruled of God for good in all cases?

The New Testament teaches the same truth. Did you ever notice how strangely the Evangelists Matthew and Mark speak of Christ's temptation? The *Spirit* drove Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted of the *devil*, and he was there with the wild beasts. What a strange statement! The holy spirit of God drives the sinless Jesus into the wilderness among the wild beasts to be tempted of Satan, the arch-enemy of all good, a murderer from the beginning, and the father of lies! Truly, God creates evil, and uses it too, for his own purposes and glory. The apostle Paul fully understood this great truth and practised it himself; hence he writes to the Corinthians, "to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus"; and he declares in his letter to Timothy that he himself had delivered certain ones unto Satan, "that they might learn not to blaspheme." It would seem also that the apostle knew something of this kind of discipline himself, for he says, "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, *the messenger of Satan*, to buffet me lest I should be exalted above measure." All this clearly proves that God overrules evil for good,—that even Satan's work shall result in blessings for God's children.

Finally, we will notice one more passage more remarkable, if possible, even than those I have cited.

In the twentieth chapter of the Revelation we have an account of the total restraint of the devil and consequent suppression of evil for a thousand years. What a blessed era of peace and righteousness that will be! and how desirable that it should continue, and that evil should never again curse the earth! But lo, wonderful to relate, at the end of the thousand years, Satan is loosed out of his prison, and again goes out to deceive the nations, and peace is banished from the earth, and war and slaughter ensues with terrible suffering and destruction! According to the common idea of the origin and final effects of evil, there would seem to be some terrible mistake here. Either Satan was not watched close enough, or his prison was insecure, or there was treachery, — some awful blunder, or more awful crime, has been committed, to let the devil loose, when once he was well secured, — surely, so it would seem from the standpoint of orthodoxism. But so it is *not*. All is plain when we see the great truth that I have tried to set forth. Satan is God's servant, to carry out his plans; God now leaves him free to work out his mischievous will among the children of men; he is "the prince of this world," "the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience." The time will come when he will be bound and put under total restraint, and so remain through the millennium; then he will be loosed because God has something more for him to do, and he will be finally disposed of at the time and in the manner that God pleases. God could destroy him now if he was so disposed, but we have seen that evil is

needful and beneficial in the end; it is one of God's creatures, and his servant, and is conducive to the accomplishment of his gracious plans, as are all other things.

Thus the Word untangles this great mystery of evil for us, and shows us clearly that it is not an interloper in God's economy; it is not a foreign substance in the delicate fabric of God's great plan, obstructing and disarranging its intricate mechanism; nay, it is a necessary *part* of that plan; it rightly *belongs* to that marvellous congeries of forces that, under the control and guidance of the one supreme mind, works and interworks steadily, and without interruption or delay, to the glorious end of creating a godlike race.

We may add that the final outcome of God's plan fully confirms the foregoing view of the problem of evil. All the details and every particular of the plan in all its length and breadth are not revealed, but the final outcome *is* revealed, and that revelation assures us that all things will result in good in the end. "Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall give praise to God" (Rom. xiv. 11, new version, margin). The whole creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. All things in heaven and earth shall be gathered together in Christ. Death shall be swallowed up in victory. God will subdue all things, and reconcile all things unto himself (Phil. iii. 21; Col. i. 20). There shall be no more anything accursed. Every created thing shall praise God (Rev. v. 13, new version), and God shall be all in all. This

is the outcome. Thank God! it is good enough. To this final result all things are tending. To such a grand victory God's creation is travelling on. We can see it by faith "afar off."

"I cannot doubt that good shall fall
At last — far off — at last to all,
And every winter turn to spring."

I cannot belittle the above grand scriptural declarations, nor do I wish to belittle them, to make them mean anything less than a perfect and absolute triumph for goodness, truth, and justice, for life and love; and if this is the outcome, then all things, evil included, are tending toward this end; and this *must* be so, because (again we reach the same conclusion) all things are of God.

CHAPTER XI.

PROBATION AND JUDGMENT.

THE subject of probation is creating a great sensation in the religious world at the present time. This is really the great theological question of the day — whether there is any probation for any after this present life. It is a well-known fact that a very large party have arisen within the church (notably in the Congregationalist communion) who plainly declare in favor of posthumous probation ; and many more who entertain that view as a “hope,” more or less definite and pronounced ; in fact, this hope, “the larger hope,” as it is called, has become very popular among Christians, and is embraced by them as a welcome relief from some of the harsh and heartless features of extreme orthodoxism. Men and women who are trying to live Christian lives are driven to embrace this hope in self-defence against a relentless dogmatism that would consign millions and millions of heathen to an endless hell, or hopeless annihilation, who had never even so much as heard of the true God or of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Common humanity revolts against such an appalling conclusion ; and to save himself from it on the one hand, and from downright infidelity and atheism on

the other, many an honest Christian has embraced this view of posthumous probation as a welcome relief.

Let us consider this subject from the standpoint of this volume. The considerations already presented will, if I err not, help us to understand this important matter.

I very much fear that the common idea of probation is erroneous. It is assumed, to begin with, that all mankind are under the sentence of eternal death, which, according to orthodoxism, means endless life in misery; all are hell-deserving and in danger of being lost forever; during this life, judgment is suspended, and an opportunity is offered to escape the execution of this impending sentence, by repentance and faith in Christ; *this* is man's *probation* — a brief chance to escape hell and secure heaven; if he fails to improve this opportunity, and dies impenitent, the sentence is irrevocably executed and the man is eternally lost. No such teaching as this, either in outline or in detail, can be found in the Bible; it is *entirely* human tradition. In the first place, no such thing as "*eternal death*" is ever spoken of in the Bible; the phrase, nor the idea, nowhere occurs in the sacred writings. Secondly, the truth is not that man is under the *sentence* of death, and in *danger* of being lost, but he is *already dead and lost*, and Christ comes to seek and save the lost, and to "give *life* to the [dead] world." Thirdly, no such ghastly view of life as this is anywhere presented in scripture. According to this view, this life, if we make the best

use of it possible, is simply a race from hell to heaven; as the hymn puts it, —

“ Nothing is worth a thought beneath,
But how I may escape the death
That never, never dies!
My sole concern, my single care,
To watch, and tremble, and prepare
Against that fatal day.”

What an utterly hideous conception of life! a constant struggle to keep out of perdition! this, the “sole concern,” the “single care”! and yet very many Christians have no higher conception of the purpose of this present existence than the above; their highest idea of salvation is salvation from the consequences of sin — an endless hell. This unworthy view is inculcated and fostered by the practice of the churches in working upon the fears of the impenitent to induce them to make a profession of religion. The great plea always is, shun perdition! prepare to die! Neither of these motives are ever urged in the Bible to induce to holy living, and yet these are the main, and oftentimes the sole exhortations to the unconverted.

Now the scriptural view of probation, if I err not, is as follows: Man's probation is the period of his discipline; training, instruction, development, and perfecting; “perfected through suffering,” as was our Saviour before us. He undergoes this trial not as an experiment, but man must be proved for his own sake; for how else can he ascertain the *truth*, and how else can he develop a character like him who

is "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person"? Bear in mind that it is *God* who is creating the race in his own image and likeness; man is not creating himself; man's probation is a part of the creative process. God's own honor and credit is at stake, and he will surely complete the work he has begun. "Being confident of this one thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. i. 6).

We have already noticed this point in another part of the book, and I will only add further, that it will make a great difference in our theology as well as in our Christian life whether we look upon man's redemption as entirely depending on *him* or as ultimately depending on God,—whether we view him as the arbiter of his own destiny or as "God's workmanship." The correctness of our theology will also greatly depend upon our idea of God. If we think of him as hampered and limited by the so-called "free moral agency" of man and the vindictive machinations of the devil, then our theology will be lame and limp, a halting, flimsy affair, that accords the Almighty only a partial victory. But if we think of him as "working *all* things after the counsel of his *own* will," as absolutely controlling men and devils, as "the Almighty God" in deed and in truth, and therefore responsible for all things,—if we think of him as one whose every attribute of power, and wisdom, and justice, and mercy, and righteousness, and whose nature of love is bent to the accomplish-

ment of the supreme happiness of all his children, and as pledged to that end, so that it is absolutely certain,—then our theology will be lusty and vigorous, a staff to lean on, a comfort and encouragement amid all the experiences of life, and an absolute assurance of final and complete victory.

In the light of the plan of the ages the intelligent reader of this volume will see that not only is it true that there is a probation for mankind after this present life, but the great mass of the world have no probation at all *until* after death. During this gospel age only the firstfruits are perfected; the great general “ingathering” is due in the “ages to come.” All this we have already considered; in this chapter we need to add a word on the nature and character of probation.

The word *probation* does not occur in the Bible; but the idea is there, and an equivalent word which is usually rendered

JUDGMENT.

“The day of judgment” is the period of the world’s probation; judgment *is* probation, *i.e.* the trial, the proving or deciding time.

In the New Testament there are several words rendered judgment; the two principal ones are *crima* and *crisis*. The former is generally used in the New Testament in the sense of unfavorable judgment, and the latter of favorable. We have analogous words in our own language:—from the former we have such words as crime, criminal, etc., and the

latter word is directly incorporated into our language in very nearly its original meaning of a deciding time, the turning point. The scriptural use of these two words is best indicated by two contrasted phrases. "Judgment unto condemnation" (Rom. v. 16) and "Judgment unto victory" (Matt. xii. 20); the former is adverse judgment, *crima*; the latter is favorable judgment, *crisis*.

The meanings given to *crima* in the original are decision, decree, judgment, condemnation; its scriptural use can be gathered from such passages as Luke xxiii. 40, where the thief on the cross is spoken of as being "in the same condemnation." Acts xxiv. 25, where we are told that Paul reasoned before Felix of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." 1 Tim. iii. 6: A bishop must not be a novice, "lest being lifted up with pride he fall into condemnation." Rev. xvii. 1: "Come hither, I will show unto thee the judgment of the great harlot." In all these passages, and many others that might be noticed, *crima* is used of adverse judgment, "judgment unto condemnation."

The meanings given to *crisis* are a separating, choosing, deciding, determining, judging trial; that this word is of favorable judgment we shall see from scriptures that we shall quote as we proceed. This latter word *crisis* is the word involving probation, as will be seen by the meanings given to it above; it means a deciding time, a trial; that is exactly what probation means; the two words probation and trial are synonymous and hence interchangeable; therefore

in the Greek word *crisis* we have an equivalent to the English word probation; thus the word is shown to be scriptural and correct.

The derivation of this word probation also makes it peculiarly fitting as applied to man; it comes from the Latin *probatio*, a proving, and applies to any proceeding to ascertain truth, to determine character; for example, we have a *probate* court where legal instruments are *proved* and tested to determine whether or no they are genuine and lawful. So man's *probation* is to prove him, to ascertain the truth, to establish his character, and to make him fit for the high destiny before him; "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

The common idea of the judgment day is that it will be a short period of time somewhere in the future, when every individual of the human race will appear before the bar of God and sentence will be pronounced upon each according to their deserts. Thus the judgment day is the time of passing sentence upon man. After he has had his trial, and his doom is sealed (in fact, he may have been in possession of his reward or punishment for hundreds of years), he is to appear before the great tribunal and hear the words, "Come, ye blessed," or "Depart, ye cursed." Furthermore, this judgment day, according to orthodoxism, is represented as a dreadful period of almost universal doom; thus the hymn describes it:

"The day of wrath! that dreadful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away;

What power shall be the sinner's stay?
How shall he meet that dreadful day?"

The horrors of this "day of wrath" are pictured in the hymns, the sermons, and writings of the church. But the Bible view is very different; according to the Word, the day of judgment is a time of blessing and of universal rejoicing, a day to be longed for, and looked forward to with the highest hopes and the most joyful anticipations; for though the judgments of the Lord are oftentimes severe and fearful in their nature, as for instance when he rained fire and brimstone from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah, yet "the *end* of the Lord," as we shall presently see in the case of these devoted cities, is that he is "very pitiful and of tender mercy" (Jas. v. 11). Hence the old prophet says:—

"Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee; with my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early"; and why all this earnest longing and intense desire for the Lord, "in the way of his judgments"? Because, "when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. xxvi. 8, 9).

Read the 67th, 96th, and 98th Psalms, and see how all creation is called upon to praise the Lord, because "he cometh to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth." There will be an awful reckoning with the

wicked when strict judgment is dealt out to the world, but the outcome will be "judgment unto victory." The Lord will "lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies." Thus God's judgments shall be abroad in the earth, and the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness. This great truth is well expressed in Zeph. iii. 8, 9.

"Therefore, wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger, for the whole earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." And then what? "For *then* will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." This is the outcome of the Lord's judgments. He judges to *save*. He shall bring forth judgment unto *victory*; not defeat, either in whole, or in part, but victory, complete and absolute. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied." "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive" (compare Psa. lxxviii. 34). "He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up." "He maketh sore, and bindeth up." "He woundeth, and his hands make whole." He even "turneth man to destruction, and saith, return ye children of men." Some are saved by grace (Eph. ii. 8), others by fire (1 Cor. iii. 15), and still others by fear (Jude 23); but whether by grace, or by fire, or by fear, the purpose of God is to *save*. "He that speaketh in

righteousness, mighty to save," — mighty to overcome every obstacle, even man's stubborn will, and to subdue all things unto himself.

In the New Testament we find the same idea of the judgment set forth; we are plainly taught that "that day" is not a day of twenty-four hours, or a short period of time, when merely sentence will be pronounced, but it is a long period, embracing many events (2 Pet. iii. 7, 8; compare Rev. xx. 4); it is the period when "the everlasting gospel" will be preached "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Rev. xiv. 6, 7); when the Lord comes to "execute judgment," the ungodly will be convinced of their ungodly deeds (Jude 14), and when his "judgments are made manifest," all nations shall come and worship before him" (Rev. xv. 4; see also Matt. xii. 18, 21; and compare Psa. lxxxvi. 9, 10).

Acts xvii. 31 is remarkably clear upon this point. We are told in this passage, that "God has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he has ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Is not this a promise of blessing unto "all men" in the judgment day? Is not the allusion to Christ's resurrection as a pledge unto all men that they will be judged in righteousness, an intimation of a blessing to all men? As Christ's judgment was "unto victory," and he was "declared to be the Son of God, with power, by the resurrection from the dead," does not the language of the above passage imply that

judgment will result in a like issue in the case of "all men"? Would not such understanding of the text be in perfect harmony with the passage we have quoted from Isaiah, that when the judgments of the Lord are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness? and does it not give us a very clear insight into the manner whereby man shall be "redeemed by judgment"?

Finally, the great confirmation of this whole subject of probation and judgment is the Bible teaching in regard to

SODOM.

We have an account of the destruction of this specially wicked city in Gen. xix. There are several references to this event in different parts of the Bible, but the most remarkable one is in the prophecy of Ezekiel, sixteenth chapter; it is this reference to Sodom that we wish now to consider. In this passage (beginning at verse 44), we have first, a comparison made between the wicked cities of Jerusalem, Samaria, and Sodom. The Lord declares that the first was more wicked than either of the other two. He goes on to tell why he destroyed Sodom (verses 49, 50), and then he declares in plain and unmistakable language that he purposes at some future time to *restore Sodom to her "former estate,"* and when he does this he will restore Jerusalem and Samaria to their former estate. Now it is plain that by Sodom is meant the *people*, the Sodomites (verses 49, 50), and it is *certain* that if the Sodomites are ever to be re-

stored to their *former estate*, it must be from the dead; for they were *all* destroyed without a single exception (see Luke xvii. 29); and it is further clear that they are thus to be restored that they may be benefited and blessed (see verses 60–63). I have not time to dwell upon this remarkable passage, nor is there any need of further explanation. It must be plain to all, that a probation after death is positively and directly taught here; no other interpretation can be put upon the passage except it be *forced* upon it; and the truth is still further confirmed by the fact that we are taught that other nations are to be restored in “the latter days,” viz. Moab, Ammon, and Elam (see Jer. xlviii. 47; xlix. 6, 39); and finally, David makes this restoration of the nations universal when he says: “All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name; for thou art great and doest wondrous things; thou art God alone.” Thus does it appear that, though thus far in the world’s history, evil has seemed to triumph over the vast majority of God’s “offspring” (Acts xvii. 29), and they have gone down to the grave in darkness, ignorance, and sin, yet it by no means follows that this sad triumph is eternal; for we see a *big hope* for the race in the “ages to come,” when God “will show the *exceeding* riches of his grace.” Well may we exclaim, in view of such a glorious “purpose of the ages,” “Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify

thy name? for thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest" (Rev. xv. 3, 4, new version).

CHAPTER XII.

LIFE AND DEATH.

IN this chapter my purpose is to bring out the *Bible* idea of life and death. Will the reader please notice this. I am not entering upon a scientific discussion of this question; I do not go to Webster for a definition of death as "extinction of being," or to orthodoxism, as "the separation of soul and body." But I wish just to take the Bible definition of life and death, and reason from that, so that we can get at the Bible idea on this subject; let the reader divest himself then as much as possible of the conventional idea of life and death, and the theological idea, and consider the subject entirely from a scriptural point of view.

We have already noticed the fact that the Bible represents fallen man as in a condition of death, having no "life in him." We have also seen that Christ is *the world's life*. "I am the resurrection and the life." "The bread of God is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." To apprehend Christ as our *life* is a higher apprehension of the Saviour than most Christians possess. We think of him as our friend, advocate, pattern, elder brother, etc. But the great truth is that he is our *life*. The race is dead, "dead in trespasses and sins," and Christ comes

that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. The scriptural evidence of this is most abundant, and the truth is most important. "If one died for all, then all died." "In Adam all died; in Christ shall all be made alive." Thus Christ is our life. "This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son; he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John v. 11, 12). "Ye are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God; when Christ *who is our life* shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

There is another passage in Paul's letter to Timothy that very forcibly sets forth this same idea. The apostle says: "Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on *the life that is life indeed*." This is the way it reads in the new version. The emphatic Diaglott puts it thus: "That they may lay hold of that which is *really* life." The word rendered "indeed" or "really" is an adverb made from the participle of the verb "to be" (*being*); lay hold of the life, *being* life; actually, really, and truly life; implying that that which men call life is not life at all. The real life is "the life hid with Christ in God." Let these great truths be fully kept in mind. Fallen man is *dead*. Christ is our *life*. Now we will consider the Bible definition of life and death.

Rom. viii. 6, 7: "To be carnally minded (literally, the mind of the flesh) is death; but to be spiritually minded (the mind of the spirit) is life and peace.

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

Every one familiar with the New Testament knows how these two terms, the flesh and the spirit, are contrasted. Gal. v. 16-26 fully illustrates this point; (see also Phil. iii. 1-7); in this passage we see what things Paul included under the head of "the flesh"; everything that pertains to this fallen state comes under that head; it refers to "the course of this world" (Eph. ii. 2) — "the fashion of this world"; (1 Cor. vii. 31) — to be engrossed in these things, to give our time and thought to them, is death. But on the other hand, "to seek those things that are above" (Col. iii. 1); to be "transformed by the renewing of our mind, that we may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God," and thus "to mind the things of the spirit"; this is life. Hence, in harmony with these definitions of life and death, the apostle says, "She that liveth in pleasure (after the fashion of this world) is dead while she liveth" (1 Tim. v. 6). But he that has been crucified with Christ, having "crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts," lives while he is dead; as Paul declares: "I have been crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; *yet not I*, but Christ liveth in me, and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God."

Now let us proceed a step further. We will connect this definition of death and life in Rom. viii. 6, with Christ's specific definition of life in John xvii. 3.

“This is life æonial, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” The meaning of the word æonial, which is simply the original word anglicized, is considered in chap. xiv. I will simply say in this connection, that the English word eternal, or everlasting, in the sense of endless, is not a correct translation of the original word. It is very plain, from the above definition, that the word æonial refers to a certain *kind* of life; not to its duration, whether endless or otherwise; æonial signifies a life of a certain nature, and that nature Jesus declares; æonial life is knowledge of God and Christ. This is “the life *being* life” — the real, the true life; any lower existence, from the Bible standpoint, is death.

But from this second definition of life follows a corresponding definition of death; if life is knowledge of God, death must be ignorance of God; and this thought we have exactly expressed in Eph. iv. 18. The apostle exhorts the Ephesian Christians not to walk, “as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind; having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart.” Here, then, we have the very thought brought out that ignorance of God is death; to be alienated from the life of God is death; and men are so alienated through the ignorance that is in them; it is because “the world knoweth not God” that it is in a condition of alienation and death — alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them.

And now see, moreover, how this view of life and death accords with the other we have noticed. To be carnally minded is death, and ignorance of God is death; to be carnally minded *is* to be spiritually ignorant, because the one that minds the things of the flesh, or “the natural man,” *cannot* receive “the things of the spirit of God”; such things are even foolishness unto him (1 Cor. ii. 13–16), and he cannot know them; hence, so long as he remains carnally minded, he must continue in ignorance, and by that ignorance he will be alienated from the life of God. It is only by the spirit that we are led into truth; and all truth is knowledge of God, so that as to be carnally minded and ignorant is death, so to be spiritually minded and to know God is life æonial.

All this is still further confirmed when we consider the reason that Paul gives why it is death to be carnally minded. “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” The word rendered “enmity” means estrangement, alienation; it occurs in the enumeration of the works of the flesh in Gal. v. 20, where it is rendered “hatred.” Thus does it appear again that death is a condition of estrangement and alienation from God — “alienated from the life of God.” Now the apostle James says: “Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own desires and enticed; and when desire hath conceived it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.” This scripture is only another way of putting Paul’s statement that “the wages of sin is death.”

Now see how perfectly all this is illustrated in the primal sin (Gen. iii.).

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant [margin, *a desire*] to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise [thus was she drawn away of her own desire and enticed], she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her and he did eat”; thus when desire had conceived it brought forth sin. Now what was the result? was sin finished? did it bring forth death? It most certainly did, according to the Bible definition of death that we have been considering. Death is the carnal condition of alienation, estrangement, and ignorance of God. This condition was immediately apparent after our first parents had sinned, for the very next time that God drew near unto them they hid themselves from him. Did not this foolish act manifest most plainly their alienation from God? and did it not also show their ignorance of him? For who can hide from him, to whom the darkness and the light are both alike (Psa. cxxxix.)? Thus is it very apparent that death worked in them; they became alienated from the life of God; they died the death that very day; that very moment of their sin they died; as God had said, “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” The Lord did not mean physical death when he said this. Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years before he was laid beneath the sod; and God declared that he should *thus* die, *i.e.* physically, when he said, “Dust thou art and unto dust

shalt thou return." But when he said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," he referred to the death in sin, the carnal mind; and this *was* the death that came upon them immediately after their sin, as was plainly evinced by their conduct; and thus "By one man in whom all have sinned [*i.e.* in whom all are counted sinners], sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men." All died in Adam; the race died, and *is* dead, — "no life in them," — none of the life that is really life.

This is the death that sin brought into the world. This was the death that Christ entered into, when "the word was made flesh," — "made in the likeness of sinful flesh," — as we have already noticed. I cannot tell how Christ could enter into such a death, — a condition of alienation, estrangement, and ignorance, but I know that he did, because so the scriptures abundantly teach. We have quite fully considered this point in chap. v., and the considerations of this chapter are further confirmation of the same. It was while in this dreadful condition — while he was a dweller in this charnel house of corruption and death — that Jesus "offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save *out of death*, and was heard, in that he feared; for though he was a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered" (Heb. v. 7, 8, new version, margin). This was the death that Christ died, the real death; this is the death in which the whole human race is

involved ; and this is the death from which Christ delivers us, as he himself says, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." In this view of the case it will be seen that salvation is life, and the *life* is the *light* (John i. 4).

Nôw all this, like everything else, is "of God." It was God that made the creation, subject to vanity. God did the sowing. "Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption ; sown in dishonor, raised in glory ; sown in weakness, raised in power ; sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body." The apostle is not talking about physical death here. We are accustomed to read this scripture at the funeral services of our loved ones, and we think that when we put their hallowed remains into the ground, then it is that it is sown in corruption, dishonor, and weakness. But I think this conception is erroneous. Man was sown in corruption, dishonor, and weakness, when the creation was made subject to vanity by the Creator himself, as we have seen in chap. iv., and that corruption, dishonor, and weakness, coming through the one man, passed upon all men, and adheres to fallen man all through this experience on the natural plane ; for God's rule is, first the natural, afterwards that which is spiritual. The natural is one part of the process of creation, and the spiritual is another part. The spiritual refers to the finished product, — completed, perfected. To be spiritual in the fullest sense is to be *finished*, "a perfect man" ; but the finishing is also a process,

as Paul sets forth in Eph. iv. 11-16. "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God [which is life], unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." In the process of man's creation, the natural and spiritual lap, and thus "the outward man is perishing while the inward man is being renewed day by day." Life and death works in the same person, but life shall triumph at last.

All this we have said is "of God." What is the purpose of it? What is the purpose of death in God's economy? This dread enemy of man must be for some good purpose, in the economy of God, or it would never have had a place in his universe. What is that purpose? *God's way to life is through death.* This is a great mystery, and we can only speak of it partially, for it is among the things "hard to be uttered"; and yet it is the plain, positive teaching of the Word that God's way of life is through suffering and death.

Jesus Christ was made "perfect through suffering," and "*if we suffer with him* we shall reign with him." Jesus himself says, "The hour is come in which the Son of Man shall be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal." Here is the whole great mystery: to save your life you must lose it; to live you must die—a truth that is

as manifest in nature as in grace. Paul says, in answer to the question, "How are the dead raised?" "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die"; it does not *live* except it *die*. This is God's way ever and always; through suffering, sorrow, darkness, sin, and death, to rest, happiness, light, holiness, and life. Hence the apostle's great desire is that "he might know Christ, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, *being made conformable unto his death*, if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead"; thus implying that being made conformable unto Christ's death is one of the *means* whereby we are to attain unto his resurrection. Hence Paul says again, "I have been crucified with Christ"; "I bear about in my body the dying of the Lord Jesus"; "I die daily"; "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross [death] of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Why all this? Because "if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him"; "if we suffer with him, we shall reign with him." Death is God's means of deliverance. "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that *through death* he might destroy him that had the power of death; that is, the devil, and *deliver* them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14, 15). Again, we are told that Jesus Christ "is the mediator of the new covenant, that *by means of death* for the redemption of the transgressions that were

under the first covenant, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb. ix. 15); and yet again the apostle writes to the Colossians saying, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh *through death*, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreprouable in his sight" (Col. i. 21, 22). Is not all this plain enough? Can we not see this great principle in God's economy that to gain life we must lose it, — to live we must die"; that "by means of death" we are delivered *out* of death? All this is certainly scriptural, whether we understand it or not. "Through death" God's children are delivered out of bondage, and brought to life.

This is a great mystery: and whether I have helped the reader to understand it or not I know not. "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven." He that hath not the *life* will not have the *light*; but at any rate, the *fact* is plainly set forth that death plays an important part in God's economy; it is God's way of deliverance and of life. "That which thou sowest does not live except it die; . . . so also is the resurrection of the dead." "He that would save his life must lose it." These considerations also will help us to understand something of

THE SECOND DEATH.

I do not know why we should conclude that "the second death" is a different *kind* of death, and for a different purpose than all the rest. If, as is certainly

the case, God's way of life is through death, death actually being a means of deliverance as we have seen; then why may not the second death be for the same purpose, and to the same end? I am well aware how strange and utterly erroneous such a view will appear to most Christians. But in view of the considerations presented in this volume it will, after a little thought, be seen to be by no means untenable. Of course this view will not be accepted by one who blindly believes in an endless hell; those, too, who look upon the second death as the "eternal death" will reject this view; but let it be remembered that there is no such thing in scripture as an endless, or eternal death. These points will be further considered in chap. xiv.

Moreover, the scriptures that speak specifically of the second death will not bear the construction put upon them by those who believe in an eternal death and an endless hell. Nowhere in the Bible is this subject spoken of except in the book of the Revelation; there are passages in other parts of the New Testament that are supposed to refer to the second death, but only in the last book of the Bible is the subject positively referred to. It is certainly reasonable that the doctrine expressed by the phrase "second death," should be in harmony with those passages where alone the phrase is used; the doctrine should not go beyond these scriptures, nor include anything not plainly embraced in the record. The passages where this expression occurs are as follows: Rev. ii. 11; xx. 6, 14; xxi. 8. An examination of these

passages will show that they do not necessarily imply endless torment, or an eternal death; they will readily bear another construction in harmony with the foregoing suggestions and with the general purpose of death in God's economy. In fact, the reader will find that the idea of an endless hell or an eternal death will not harmonize with these passages at all; in the place of the phrase "second death," let the attempt be made to substitute in these passages the expression endless torments, or eternal death, and it will at once be seen how utterly out of harmony the passages are with these dogmas. The intelligent reader will also perceive that such an interpretation of these passages would place them in opposition to the general teaching of the Word as set forth in the preceding pages. We have seen that the outcome of God's creative plan is all things gathered together in Christ, all things reconciled to God, all things subdued, all things made new, and God all in all. Let us not interpret single passages in such a way as to annul or belittle these grand and soul-inspiring declarations.

The principle reason, however, why I believe that the second death is not a finality, but a means to an end, and that end a good and blessed one, is because of the great Bible truth that finally *death itself shall be destroyed*, so that there shall come a time when there shall absolutely be "no more death." Of course this destruction includes all death, first and second, and all the rest. Death — everything that comes under that head — shall be destroyed, "swal-

lowed up in victory." Now what does this imply? *How* shall death be destroyed?

Looking at the question independent of scripture, we might say that the ultimate destruction of death might refer to the time when no more would die; all having died that were to die, the rest would live forever; hence death would be destroyed; there would be no more death; this would be a possible way of explaining the scriptural declaration that death shall ultimately be destroyed. Another explanation would be that the destruction of death implies the ultimate restoration to life of all mankind; as to destroy life means to kill, to destroy death ought to mean to make alive; and when we are told in the Bible that death shall ultimately be destroyed, the significance of that declaration is that all held under the power of death will ultimately be delivered; and that death would not be destroyed so long as there was one soul held under its power, and if some are to die eternally then death will never be destroyed. This latter view might seem to some extreme, and yet all must admit that it is not unwarranted by the declaration that death shall be destroyed. Death is a state or condition of mankind, and that state or condition cannot be destroyed until all mankind *in* that condition are delivered from it. In order to destroy sickness out of the world it would be necessary to make everybody well; to destroy poverty you must make everybody rich; to destroy life you must put every one to death; to destroy death you must make every one alive. This view is certainly reasonable and perfectly legiti-

mate; and it certainly is preferable to the other, in that it is a broader and grander view of the final destruction of the last enemy. In the former view there is no destruction of anything at all. Of course the time will come when the last one will have died, and the rest of mankind being made immortal will never die; hence one might say "there shall be no more death"; and yet this declaration would be scarcely applicable to such a condition of things, but rather "there shall be no more *dying*." Such a view would rather imply the destruction of *dying*, *i.e.* the cessation of dying as an act, rather than the destruction of death as a state. In this view, strictly speaking, death is not destroyed at all; nothing is destroyed, but simply men cease to die; it is merely the cessation of an occurrence, and not the destruction of anything at all. However, one might say, with some degree of plausibility, that this view covers the idea of the destruction of death. The other view certainly covers that idea; if all who are held under the power of death are delivered therefrom forever, then surely the state of death is destroyed most thoroughly, and we could say, with the utmost positiveness, "there shall be no more death." This latter view is grand and glorious, and implies the special interposition of almighty power in order to deliver mankind and thus to destroy death; it would be a work worthy of God and which only God could do; it would be a grand consummation of the plan of the ages, according to which Christ is to reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet, and the last

enemy that shall be destroyed is death. Here are these two views of the destruction of death contrasted. Now *which view is scriptural?* that is the question. The latter view is the grander and most godlike; the former view makes the destruction of death to be comparatively a very small affair, simply the cessation by limitation of dying; but if that view is the scriptural one, of course every lover of God's Word will bow to its authority. But if the latter view is the scriptural one, as well as the grand and glorious one, then of course we will accept that as not only perfectly satisfactory, but as scriptural. Now which *is* scriptural?

In the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, Paul speaks of the destruction of death. He quotes from the Old Testament, viz. Isa. xxv. 6-8, and Hos. xiii. 14. Turning to those passages we find the scriptural explanation of the destruction of death, viz. that it implies a restoration to life, and favor, and blessedness. Hear it: "And in this mountain [*i.e.* the mountain of God's kingdom: compare Isa. ii. 2-5] shall the Lord of hosts make unto *all* people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined; and he will destroy [*margin, swallow up*] in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will *swallow up death in victory*; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth. For the Lord hath spoken it."

Now whoever can see in this glorious explanation of the destruction of death nothing but a reference to the time when dying shall cease,—those who are dead being eternally dead, and those who are living being immortal,—those who can see nothing more than this in this language must be, so it seems to me, wanting in spiritual discernment. Why, the language actually *labors*, with almost redundant prodigality, to express the richness and fulness of the feast to all people, and the victory over death. “The Lord of hosts will make unto all people a feast of fat things,”—that is not sufficient to express its richness—“a feast of wines on the lees,”—and then the prophet repeats with added emphasis—“of fat things *full of marrow*,”—the very richest kind of fat—“of wines on the lees *well refined*,”—the sweetest kind of sweet wine, and that which has the most “body.” And he will *swallow up* in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. “*He will swallow up death in victory.*” It is not sufficient, it would seem, to simply say that the Lord will *remove* the covering of blindness and death cast over all people, and that he will destroy death, or be victorious over it, but he will *swallow up* this awful covering, and swallow up *in victory* the last enemy, death.

The passage in Hosea is even more explicit and positive than the one just noticed. “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help; . . . I will ransom them from the power of the grave. I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy

plagues! O grave, I will be thy destruction! Repentance [change of purpose] shall be hid from mine eyes." This passage amounts to an exact definition of what is meant by the destruction of death. To destroy death means to ransom and redeem from its power. *Thus* shall death be destroyed; and such a destruction is in keeping with the remarkable declaration that death shall be *swallowed up in victory*; and it is also in harmony with Paul's triumphant apostrophe to death — "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" If there is such a thing as endless death, if death has a sting that rankles eternally, then surely the triumphant tone of the above exclamation seems to be rather gratuitous. But if the sting of death is to be eternally destroyed, and the dark realm of the grave ultimately despoiled of every victim, then, indeed, may we shout exultant: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

I cannot tell how the above scriptures and considerations will impress my readers, but to me they are absolutely conclusive as to the significance of the Bible declaration of the destruction of death — not simply the cessation of dying, but the absolute deliverance of all the dead — dead in any sense — and their restoration to the blessed life of God; nothing short of this, it seems to me, will measure up even to the apparent meaning (to say nothing about its deeper, richer, *unexpressed* significance) of the language of scripture upon this subject. Hence am I led to believe that the second death is not an exception

in God's economy, but, like death in the present time, it is for the deliverance and restoration of those who are exercised thereby. If, notwithstanding the deluge of fire and brimstone upon Sodom, it is yet to return to its "former estate" to be blessed and saved, and if this case is a *pattern* case, then it would not be so very strange if the "lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death," should not entirely cut off from hope those who are engulfed within its fiery billows; especially so, since some are "saved by fire"; and more especially so, since death in God's economy is a means of deliverance and the way of life. "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

CHAPTER XIII.

RESURRECTION.

THE preceding pages of this volume, and especially the two preceding chapters, have prepared us for the consideration of the all-important subject of the resurrection. I would bespeak the reader's careful attention to this subject, for it is the keystone to the arch of Christianity. It would be no wonder if the reader is surprised at this statement, seeing so little is made of this doctrine by the modern church ; but if he is at all familiar with the New Testament, a little thought and study will convince him that the truth is not overstated, and he will, perhaps, be led to inquire how a doctrine so profoundly fundamental has fallen into such disuse.

Paul considered the doctrine of so much importance that he even goes so far as to say that "if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen, and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain ; ye are yet in your sins, and are of all men most miserable ; then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished" ; and yet this is the doctrine that is scarcely ever mentioned or even referred to in the Christian pulpits of to-day. Well did Adam Clark say, "There is not a doctrine of the gospel on which more *stress*

is laid, and there is not a doctrine in the present system of preaching which is treated with more neglect." The fact is, that the modern false theological idea of entering at once upon our reward or punishment at death has nullified and rendered needless, and almost farcical, the tremendous Bible doctrines upon which the whole Christian system depends, of resurrection and judgment.

Now the question that we wish to try and answer is this: What is meant in the Bible by a resurrection? Many Christians would readily reply to this question, that a resurrection is simply the dead coming back to life, and they would think that the whole subject was thus settled and disposed of. But a little thought will soon convince one that such an answer is far from being satisfactory. How many resurrections have there been, thus far, since the creation? The Bible reveals but one, that of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we are distinctly told that he was the "*first* that should rise from the dead" (Acts xxvi. 23; Col. i. 18); and yet we know that several persons have been raised from the dead, both in the Old and New Testament times. Elijah raised the widow's son; Christ raised the ruler's daughter, Lazarus, and others, and Peter raised Dorcas; but we can see at once that these were not resurrections. These were simply instances of bringing back the physically dead to physical life again, and when thus brought back they were still under the dominion of death, and must just as surely die again as though they had never been the subjects of such a

marvellous experience. But those "who obtain the resurrection from the dead" *cannot* die (Luke xx. 35, 36); they, like Christ, are "raised up from the dead, *no more* to return to corruption (Acts xiii. 34); "death hath no more dominion over them" (Rom. vi. 9). A resurrection, then, is an absolute deliverance from the dominion of death. Resurrection life is not like our present existence, so far under the dominion of death that fallen man is actually reckoned as dead already (see Matt. viii. 22; 2 Cor. v. 14); resurrection life is a life absolutely beyond the reach of death; those who obtain that life *cannot* die. All this must be plain to every thoughtful Christian and should be kept distinctly in mind in studying this subject. In harmony with this Bible view of the resurrection, it will be seen that it is man's great hope, and greatest blessing; the hope of the resurrection (Acts xxiii. 6; xxiv. 15) is the hope of deliverance from the bondage of corruption — life from the dead.

Is not this view of the resurrection clearly taught? that is, that a resurrection is something more than a return to physical life? and yet many seem to be utterly unable to see it, and those, too, who have made the subject a special study. For example, there comes to my table every month a very excellent pamphlet especially devoted to the elucidation and emphasizing of this much-neglected doctrine; the editor rightly maintaining that this doctrine is the very marrow and spirit of the gospel and the hope of the race; and yet in that pamphlet the editor

refers to the raising of Lazarus as "the resurrection of Lazarus." Now is not this a misuse of the term resurrection? Was the raising of Lazarus from the dead a resurrection? I think not. Lazarus was raised from physical death back again to physical life, but he was not raised "out from among the dead ones"; this is a literal translation of Phil. iii. 11, also of 1 Pet. i. 3, and these words exactly express the truth. Remember that according to the Bible the mere animal man is in a condition of death, whether he be beneath the sod or above it. "Let the dead bury their own dead"; the corpse that was being buried was no more dead in this Bible sense than those who were burying it. "Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood ye have *no* life in you"; no one can be any more dead than that; no life in them; and yet those to whom Christ uttered these words were alive as we speak, but in the Bible sense they were dead, utterly destitute of any life. A resurrection delivers us from *this* death, the death of fallen man, and puts us into possession of "the life that is life indeed"; by a resurrection one is delivered "out from among the dead ones" altogether, and placed upon a plain where he cannot die any more. Lazarus passed through no such process as this; he was still under the power of death after he was raised, just the same as before, and after a while he was again laid away in the tomb. Hence to speak of "the resurrection of Lazarus" is a misuse of the term, and shows a misapprehension of the truth in regard to this great subject. No one but

Christ has as yet had a resurrection; he was the "first that should rise from the dead," in the full and perfect sense; and this, by the way, is another evidence that Lazarus did not have a resurrection; for if he did, then Christ would not have been the first to have passed through that experience. Jesus was "raised up from the dead [literally, out from among the dead ones], no more to return to corruption" (Acts xiii. 34). He says, "I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore"; and every one that is "made conformable unto *his* death," and comes to know "the power of *his* resurrection," will, like him, "never die," being in this respect "equal unto the angels." We see, then, what a resurrection is; something quite otherwise and far superior to anything that Lazarus passed through, although his experience was most wonderful. Resurrection is the consummation of the creative process, the entrance into the perfect life.

The word *resurrection*, from the Latin *resurgo*, means to rise or stand up again; the original word in the New Testament (*anastasis*) means a making to rise or stand up; a restoration; a setting up again; a rebuilding. In Luke ii. 34 the word is rendered "rising again." The word, then, means a restoration; a rebuilding. "By man came death; by man came also the restoration of the dead." Man has two representatives, Adam and Christ; by the former came death, by the latter comes the restoration of the dead. We have seen in the preceding chapter the nature of the death that came by Adam; also the life that

Christ imparts; not mere physical existence; that, in the Bible, as we have seen, is not counted as life at all, but the life *being* life, the real, the non-forfeitable life; the life over which death has no dominion. These considerations make the resurrection plain; and every one can see, thereby, that nothing short of full deliverance from death and entrance into the perfect life should be spoken of as a resurrection.

Now we will advance a step further. As there are two judgments, — “judgment unto victory” and “judgment unto condemnation,” — so there are two resurrections, — “the resurrection of life” and “the resurrection of judgment.” We find these two expressions in John v. 29.

The reader is doubtless aware that the word in this passage that is rendered “damnation” in the common version, means judgment, and should be so rendered, and is so rendered in the new version. It is the same word that we have already studied in chap. xi., meaning, as we have seen, judgment, trial, or probation. The rendering of this word “damnation” in this passage is a striking illustration of the blinding effect of formal creeds. Within the compass of nine verses, here in this connection (verses 22–30), the original word occurs five times, and is translated three different ways. In verse 22 the word is rendered judgment, as it should be, or trial; in verse 24 the same word is rendered condemnation; in verse 27, judgment again; in verse 29, damnation; and yet again, in verse 30, judgment. An

examination of the context will clearly show that the reason for these unwarranted variations in the rendering of the same word was the influence of the creed; the creed taught that when a wicked man died — “they that have done evil” — his case was hopeless; he must henceforth and forever suffer the torments of hell; hence the word could not mean here what it meant elsewhere (as for instance in the passage, “judgment unto victory”), and so they took the liberty to change it according to their creed; the grim and ominous word “damnation” suited the creed, and therefore damnation it was. We have seen, however, that resurrection is always a blessing; and to speak of the resurrection of damnation is as absurd and incongruous as to speak of the *blessing* of damnation. When Paul says that he has *hope* toward God, that there will be a resurrection, both of the just and of the unjust (Acts xxiv. 15), he certainly intimates that this hope is in some way to be a blessing to both parties; so in the scripture we are studying, however the expression “resurrection of judgment” may be understood, it seems to me that it must certainly be conceded from the significance of the two words singly, that in conjunction they must mean something favorable; judging from the use of these words in other scripture, and the strict meaning of the words themselves, it would be a most unwarranted departure from uniformity and consistency, to use them in this passage to express an unmitigated and never-ending disaster. What, then, is the meaning of this expression, “resurrec-

tion of judgment"? Our consideration of the two subjects of the Judgment, and of Life and Death, will enable us to answer this question.

We have seen that creation is a process; a part of that process — the finishing part as we might say — is judgment, and the consummation of *that* process is resurrection. This process of creation is divided into two stages, the animal and the spiritual, and God's order is first the animal, afterward that which is spiritual (1 Cor. xv. 46). We have seen that these two terms indicate the fallen and the restored condition respectively; and as both are parts of the one process of creation, so each is a process in itself as the scripture indicates, "though our outward man is perishing, the inward man is being renewed day by day." The great mass of mankind are still in the mere animal condition; they live and die in that condition, because, as we have seen, the probation or judgment of the majority of men comes after death; *i.e.* they will not until then enter upon the spiritual or finishing process: as already intimated, judgment has to do with this spiritual part of the process of man's creation, and the consummation of it is resurrection; the resurrection of judgment then refers to this spiritual or finishing process. There is a class, the firstfruits, who have their judgment in this present age; they hear his Word and believe on him that sent Christ, and possess the life of faith, — "the life that I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God." Hence they will not come into the general judgment, but have passed from death unto life by

faith — “now the just shall live by faith”; and these come forth unto the resurrection of life, *i.e.* they enter into the full and perfect life before the day of general judgment, for they are the judges, to instruct, and discipline, and save the race. The meaning of the passage then is as follows :

“They that have done good come forth unto the resurrection of life”; that is, they come forth from their graves unto the *completion* of the spiritual stage of creation, which is life, “the life that is life indeed.” “And they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment”; that is, they come forth from their graves unto the *beginning* of the spiritual stage of creation, which is judgment or probation. They that come forth unto the resurrection of life “have part in the first resurrection,” “but the rest of the dead” [*i.e.* the rest of the dead and fallen race] “live not” [in the true sense] “until the thousand years are finished.”

All this is eminently scriptural, harmonizing and explaining the words of Christ in the passage we are examining, and fully according with other scripture we have studied, and especially with the plan of the ages.

CHAPTER XIV.

RETRIBUTION.

I HAVE borne my testimony on the pages of this volume to my uncompromising belief in the awful reality of God's retributions. There is no law in God's universe more sure than this unrelenting, inexorable law of retribution: "Every transgression and disobedience shall receive its just recompense of reward." "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The absolute *certainty* of punishment should be emphasized and insisted upon; but to teach its *eternity* is a vital mistake, amounting to a slander upon God and a most awful misrepresentation of his character. There is punishment in this world for sin, there is punishment in the world to come; and by no feeble gasp of repentance at the last moment can this punishment be avoided. But the punishments of God are salutary and remedial, and though they may be, like the punishment upon Sodom, age-lasting in their effects, yet the outcome shall be blessing and salvation.

The main object of this chapter is to show that the doctrine of an endless hell is not supported by scripture. I am well aware that the common idea is that the Bible teaches the eternity of punishment. Many who revolt at the horror of this dogma of endless woe,

and rebel against its awful shadow, yet feel obliged to believe it, because they suppose it is taught in the Bible, and many reject the Bible and are practically infidels for the same reason.

We will briefly review the scriptures with reference to this dogma of an endless hell. We shall find that the passages that seem to support that dogma are very few, while the great mass of scriptural evidence is decidedly against it. The general teaching of scripture on the final destiny of the race, and the final outcome of God's plan, is grandly expressed by the apostle in his epistle to the Ephesians, — "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times [when all the ages have run their course] God will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him."

We will first examine the Old Testament with reference to this subject.

If we search this part of the Bible through from Genesis to Malachi, we shall not find a single passage that, *properly* interpreted, affords the slightest support for the doctrine of endless torment, and only *three* passages at most that can be made by *any* method of interpretation, even to *seem* to support this doctrine. Here is the state of the case in regard to the Old Testament; that part of the Word includes all of God's revelation for the race for four thousand years. Is it not simply inconceivable that, if the doctrine of eternal torment is true, God should leave the race for four thousand years without any clear or positive light on the subject? The most strenuous

advocates of this doctrine do not pretend to find any support for it in any of the early writings of the Old Testament. Neither Moses, nor Samuel, nor Elijah, nor Elisha, nor the writers of the historical books, nor Ezra, nor Nehemiah, nor David, nor fourteen out of the sixteen prophets, say one word that can by any possible means be made to teach this doctrine. Can it be that this doctrine is true, and the Old Testament be thus silent in regard to it? Would God condemn the unfaithful "watchman" for not warning the sinner, and require his blood at his hand, and yet he himself leave mankind for four thousand years unwarned of the awful doom that awaited those who died in their sins?

Let it be noticed that the doctrine we oppose is that of *endless* torments. There is abundance of scripture to prove that there is a hell, a gehenna of fire, and fearful retribution, both in this world and that which is to come; but these scriptures do not teach an *endless* hell. Many passages are quoted to prove this doctrine of endless woe that do not touch the subject at all; for example, the passage in Psa. ix. 17 will be quoted with great vehemence and emphasis: "The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God." "There, don't that prove that there is an endless hell for the wicked?" Does it? What is there in this scripture, take it how you will, to prove that future punishment is *endless*? Truly, nothing; so in Psa. xi. 6 there is a dreadful punishment threatened against the wicked, but not the slightest intimation that that

punishment will be never-ending. Take for a further example such passages as Prov. i. 24, 33; Isa. xxx. 27, 28, 33. These scriptures and others like them indicate fearful retributions, but there is nothing in any of these passages, though we put upon them the very harshest interpretation possible, to teach the endlessness of future punishment. I ask the reader's special attention to this point. The question is: What is there in the Bible to support the doctrine of the eternity of future retribution?

I have said that there are three passages, and only three, in the Old Testament that according to *any* system of interpretation can be made to give apparent support to this dogma. There are plenty of scriptures besides these that speak in strong and unmis-takable terms of the punishment of the wicked, but none others that can be made to give any support to the idea of the endlessness of that punishment. These three passages are the following:

Isa. xxxiii. 14: The whole force of this passage, as an argument in favor of endless torments, depends on the word rendered "everlasting"; the significance of this word we shall fully consider in connection with scripture in the New Testament; we will therefore leave it for the present. We will also postpone the consideration of the second passage for the same reason, Dan. xii. 2, where again the whole force of the argument turns on the word "everlasting."

The last passage is Isa. lxvi. 24. "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their

worm shall not die; neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh." This it is claimed refers to the future punishment of the wicked in hell; and the statement that their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, proves that they will suffer eternally. Two considerations, however, entirely break the force of this argument. First, the *scene* of this passage is on this earth and not in hell. Read the context and you will see that the restoration of Israel and the exaltation of Jerusalem is the theme; and the mention of all nations, horses, chariots, and mules, new moons, and sabbaths, and all flesh coming to worship, shows that the scene of the passage is this earth; hence it cannot be used as a proof in regard to an endless hell. Secondly, let it be noticed that it is the "carcasses" of these men, *i.e.* dead bodies, corpses, upon which the undying worm and the unquenchable fire is feeding. So that if one persist in taking the text as describing the torments of hell, then they should understand that it is only corpses that are cast therein, and hence there is no endless suffering. We shall refer to this passage again in connection with Mark ix. 44, where our Lord quotes and comments upon it. We have said enough for the present to show that the passage cannot refer to the endless suffering of the lost in hell.

This is the state of the case in the Old Testament; surely, no one will claim that the doctrine can be proved from this part of the Bible. On the other hand, the Old Testament is full of the broadest and

most universal promises; many of these we have already quoted; many more will be found by him who will search, assuring us that the triumph of the right will ultimately be universal and absolute.¹ The entire Old Testament, in what it says and what it omits to say, presents a most sweeping and invincible argument in favor of the final "restitution of all things"; and in view of this fact, we would say with Canon Farrar in his "Mercy and Judgment": "Those who really reverence God's Word will see from these passages, and ten times as many more, that they may trust in the loving kindness of the Lord for their sad and suffering brethren, no less than for themselves, and that if God is forced to punish, it is only because he loves. No bigotry, no ignorance, no hard theology, no angry anathemas shall rob us of one inch of the breadth of hope which these words inspire. If we had no book of scripture left us but the single book of Job, we should see from that alone, that for the champions of a pitiless 'orthodoxy' God feels nothing but disapproval. He does not strive to silence the natural cry of the human heart. He has never reproved the natural sense of horror which, with a God forbid! flings from it the syllogisms of a loveless and unspiritual logic."

Now we turn to the New Testament. If the doctrine of endless torments is taught in the Bible, it must be in the New Testament, for it cannot be

¹ See, for example, Psa. xxii. 27, 28; lxiv. 9; lxv. 2; lxvi. 4; lxvii. 7; lxxxvi. 9; exiii. 3. Isa. xlv. 21-24. Compare Rom. xiv. 11, new version, margin; Micah vii. 18, 19.

proved from the Old; and even in the New Testament there are only a very few texts that the doctrine can lean upon. The passages that are most generally relied upon to prove this doctrine are the parables of the tares and the wheat, the ten virgins, and the rich man and Lazarus; the scriptures that refer to the so-called unpardonable sin; those that speak of the punishment of the wicked as "everlasting"; those that refer to the undying worm and the quenchless fire; the case of Judas, "the son of perdition," and the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death; besides several isolated passages, such as, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." This passage is sometimes triumphantly referred to as a proof-text for endless torments, as though it read, the wrath of God abideth on him *eternally*. Suppose we take it in that sense; what would it teach? Why, that all who did not believe on the Lord, at the time when these words were uttered, would be eternally lost; did Christ mean to teach any such thing as that? Certainly not; the teaching of the passage is simply to the effect that as long as one remains in unbelief, he cannot see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. "The life that I now live," says Paul, "I live by the faith of the Son of God"; the unbeliever knows nothing of this life, but is under God's wrath and curse; this is a matter of fact, but there is nothing in the passage to indicate that he will remain so forever. Again, the advocates of an endless hell quote, "He that believeth

not, shall be damned"; true, but it does not say that he shall be damned (condemned) to all eternity; the unbeliever shall be condemned, the wicked shall be cast into hell, the wrath of God abideth on them as long as they remain in a condition of unbelief and wickedness; but that their case is hopeless and irremediable, these scriptures nowise affirm. I have heard one passage quoted with great confidence, to prove that the wicked dead are hopelessly lost. Christ said to the Jews (John viii. 21), "Ye shall seek me and shall die in your sins; whither I go ye cannot come"; this is the way the passage reads: it is usually quoted, "whither I go ye shall *never* come"; it does not say that, but that is the way it is usually quoted, and the inference is that Christ declared that those wicked Jews would be lost forever; but now we have positive evidence that Christ did not mean any such thing, for in John xiii. 33, he uses the very same language to his disciples. "Ye shall seek me, and as I said unto the Jews, whither I go ye cannot come, so now I say to you." It will be seen that whatever these words meant to the Jews, they meant the same thing to his disciples; hence they could not have the meaning of a hopeless doom.

Now let us glance briefly at the other scriptures we have referred to as being relied upon to sustain the endless hell idea.

The parables of the tares and wheat (Matt. xiii.), of the ten virgins (Matt. xxv.), and of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke xvi.): What is there in any one

of these parables to indicate the *eternity* of punishment? In Christ's explanation of the parable of the tares and wheat we read, "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." This scripture indicates some dreadful punishment; but is there any intimation here that it is to be endless? Surely, no one will claim that there is. So with the parable of the ten virgins; the foolish virgins came after the door was shut, and the Lord said, I know you not, and they failed to get in to the marriage. Well, and what then? "Why," says the one who is trying to prove an endless hell, "this door to the marriage is the door of mercy, and the time will come when it will be shut, and Christ will leave the mediatorial throne, and those who have not made their peace with God will be lost forever." This is about the way that this, and other similar scripture (*e.g.* Luke xiii. 25-30), are pressed into service in support of this dogma. But surely no one will claim that the above is positively taught in these parables; the above interpretation is a possible one, perhaps, and there may be a dozen other possible explanations of the same parable; but surely no one should build up such a tremendous doctrine as that of an endless hell upon such doubtful foundation; there is no such thing spoken of in the Bible as a "door of mercy," and if there were, I am sure it would never be shut, for we are told scores of times that God's mercy "endureth

forever," and "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and forever"; and as to his leaving the mediatorial throne, we read that "he *ever* liveth to make intercession for us." The truth is that formal doctrines ought not to be built upon such doubtful portions of scripture as parables, that may be explained in several different ways, and one person has just as much authority as another to determine which is the correct explanation.

The foregoing remarks will also apply to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Explain this parable as you will, what is there in it to prove that the future punishment of the wicked is endless? "Why," says one, "does not Abraham say to the rich man, 'Between us and you there is a great gulf *fixed*, so that they that would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence'?" Yes, he says that; and are you sure that that means that no one ever *will* pass that gulf, and that it is fixed to all eternity? Would not the very same words that Abraham uses to the rich man in hell be applicable to the impenitent sinner here in this world? Between him and God there is a great gulf fixed, and he is utterly unable to pass it; and if that gulf is never bridged, or the sinner never receives help, he must remain eternally "far from God." "No man can come except the Father draw him." But God has laid help upon one mighty to save, and "now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

Furthermore, let it be noticed that the rich man is

not in Gehenna, but in Hades (see new version); the same place that the soul of Christ went to when *he* died (Acts ii. 27); and notice, also, that Abraham and Lazarus were both in the same place, as is plainly indicated in the new version by the insertion of the word “here” in verse 25. And furthermore, let it be especially noticed, that the rich man in the parable is a representative, not of the poor outcast Gentile, but of the sons of Abraham, church members—those who have “Moses and the prophets.” The rich man does not represent the heathen world, the great mass of mankind, but one who, blessed with great light and privileges, sins against the former, and fails to improve the latter, and so finds himself at last in a worse condemnation than as though he had never had the light. The parable is written as a reproof and warning to the loveless self-righteous Pharisee. Let the “brethren” of the rich man in these latter days take warning also. At any rate, the parable does not touch the question of the *final* destiny of the entire race, and there is certainly no positive evidence in it of *endless* torment.

I do not pretend to explain this parable, or to decide whether it is to be taken as the relation of an imaginary circumstance, for the sake of inculcating the great lesson that “that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God” (verse 15), or whether it is the narration of an actual occurrence; this portion of scripture has received abundance of attention from many men of many creeds, and it will not be difficult for the reader

to collect together, if he please, a dozen or more different interpretations ; and he will, of course, accept that one that is in harmony with his own views ; but let it be remembered that none of these explanations are authoritative, and the very fact that there are so many of them, should make us hesitate to base an important doctrine upon any of them, but to seek among the plain, direct statements of Holy Writ, and especially in its general drift and scope for the foundations of our faith. It is not so much to disprove the doctrine of endless torment that I write, as to show that the Bible, properly interpreted, gives no support to that dogma. I do not deny but that there are passages in our English version from which this doctrine may be inferred. But even these passages do not necessarily teach it, and the Bible as a whole is overwhelmingly opposed to it, as I shall hope to show. I am trying to show how much (or rather how *little*) support for this doctrine there is in the Bible ; and that it is only by a strained, extreme, and harsh interpretation of a few passages that it can be supported at all ; and that these few passages so interpreted are thereby arrayed against the great mass of scriptural teachings.

We come now to the so-called unpardonable sin. Is there such a sin taught in the Bible ? Most Christians believe there is. The writer, with all deference and diffidence, would record his belief that no such sin is taught ; but even if there is, it nowhere says that that sin is punishable by an eternity of suffering, and I do not suppose that any one will claim

that it does. Here I might rest the subject, so far as the immediate point at issue is concerned. But I will add a word in hopes of clearing the scriptures from some obscurity in this connection, occasioned by mis-translations of the original.

There are certain passages that are supposed to teach an unpardonable sin. We will examine Matt. xii. 31, 32. If an unpardonable sin is taught anywhere in the Bible, it is taught in this passage.

“Wherefore I say unto you all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.” According to Mark, Christ says, “Verily I say unto you, all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme.” Here is a most sweeping declaration of universal forgiveness; now according to Matthew, the Saviour adds, “but the blasphemy against the holy spirit shall not be forgiven unto men.” If Christ had stopped here and said no more, it would be plain that one sin was unpardonable, but now read the next verse. “And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the holy spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world [age, see new version, margin]; neither in the world [age] to come.” Now what is the force of this language?

First, the Lord Jesus proclaims universal amnesty for all sins and to all sinners; then he *seems* to make one exception to this proclamation, but his further remarks show that this apparent exception is only a

modification in point of time as to *when* certain sins may be forgiven. Most sins may be forgiven in *this* world. Some sins not forgiven in this world *may* be forgiven in the world to come. This is implied in the Saviour's language; one sin shall *not* be forgiven in the world to come; this certainly implies that some sins *will* be forgiven then; and then what is implied as to this one particular sin of blasphemy?—that it is absolutely unpardonable? Will the language bear such a construction? The blasphemy against the holy spirit shall not be forgiven, neither in this age nor in the age to come. Does this language teach that this sin will *never* be forgiven? Does it not rather imply that it may be forgiven in some of the bright *ages* to come, whereof Paul speaks, wherein the Lord will “show the *exceeding* riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus”? However we may understand this word “age,” there were certainly many of them yet to come at this time when Christ spoke, for long afterward Paul speaks of “the *ages* to come”; hence when Christ says that a certain sin will not be forgiven, neither in this age nor in the next, it certainly does not positively imply that it will *not* be forgiven in some subsequent age, but rather, if anything, it implies that it *will* be forgiven. But does it not say in Mark iii. 29, that “he that shall blaspheme against the holy spirit hath *never* forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation”? and does not this settle the question of an unpardonable sin? It *would* settle it if the translation was

correct, but it is not ; and yet the error is perpetuated in the new version, because if they had translated it correctly it would have endangered the creed.

The words rendered "hath never forgiveness" are literally "hath not forgiveness to the age." Those who have the Emphatic Diaglott will find it thus, both in the text and in the interlineal translation. I will also give another authority for this rendering that no scholar will question, neither can any one doubt his orthodoxy, viz. Dr. Robert Young. In his Bible translation the passage under consideration is rendered thus : "Whosoever may speak evil in regard to the holy spirit hath not forgiveness to the age, but is in danger of age-during judgment." There is no better authority in the world to-day, on a point of this kind, than Dr. Young ; and the above is his rendering ; it will be seen that the passage so rendered is in perfect harmony with the one in Matt. xii. that we have already considered ; the one that commits this sin hath not forgiveness to the age, but there is no intimation that the offender will remain unforgiven to all eternity ; on the contrary, the very fact that the period is designated during which this sin will *not* be forgiven, clearly implies that at some subsequent period it *will* be forgiven. The blessed fact, then, in regard to this scripture is that instead of announcing an unpardonable sin, Christ declares that there is *no* sin unpardonable. "All manner of sin and blasphemy *shall* be forgiven unto men." To this declaration there is no exception, but only certain modifications, as we have seen. Most sins may

be forgiven in this age; some sins not forgiven in this age may be forgiven in the age to come; but one sin is so heinous in its nature, and so disastrous in its effects, that it will not be forgiven, neither in this age nor in the age to come. Thus the one committing this sin is guilty of an age-during sin; or is in danger of age-during judgment; that is to say, he has committed a sin, the effect of which will be age-during. The new version reads, "is guilty of an eternal sin." The word rendered "eternal" is *æonion*, that we have already referred to several times, and shall notice particularly a little further on. Dr. Young renders it "age-during," and he is one of the first linguists of modern times. We have already considered the subject of the judgment, and in connection with this scripture we have an illustration of age-during judgment. The Jews committed this sin against the holy spirit (Mark iii. 30); that is, they attributed to the devil the works that Christ performed by the spirit of God (Matt. xii. 24, 28), and the consequences of their sin have been age-during upon that people. They have been "cast off" as a branch from a tree during this gospel age; but they shall be "grafted in" again, and this their great iniquity shall be pardoned, "for God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all" (Rom. xi.).

Thus this scripture stands in my mind. I see in it no premonition of a hopeless doom; no foreshadowing of sinners unforgiven to all eternity. However, should my reader be unable to accept this view, in-

sisting rather that there is a sin that shall never be forgiven, still there is nothing in the passage to teach the endlessness of punishment; hence *that* doctrine receives from it no support. We cannot minutely examine the other scriptures that are relied upon to prove the possibility of committing a sin that hath never forgiveness. They certainly express awful possibilities of retribution in the future, but nothing to indicate that that retribution will be never-ending. However we explain these scriptures, they at least give no support to the dogma we oppose.

The case of Judas is sometimes appealed to in proof of this dogma. But again I call attention to the fact that there is nothing in connection with the history of the arch-traitor to prove the *endlessness* of torment. The subject of the second death we have already considered in chap. xii. But I would also remind the reader in relation to this subject, that endless torments cannot be proved thereby. The lake of fire and brimstone, "*which is the second death*" (Rev. xxi. 8), would be more likely to indicate a total destruction of the wicked, than their eternal existence in torments.

We come now to the undying worm and the quenchless fire (Mark ix. 43-50).

"If thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

This latter declaration is repeated in verses 46 and

48; but it will be found that these two verses are omitted in the new version; they are interpolations, introduced by some over-zealous advocate of endless woe to heighten the effect and intensify the luridness of the language. Now the question we have to consider is this: What is there in this passage to indicate the eternity of punishment? The quenchless fire and the undying worm, would be the reply. But do these symbols necessarily teach the endlessness of suffering? Is there no other possible explanation? Probably no one will deny but that the passage may be explained in some other way. The point for us to decide then would be what explanation of this passage would best harmonize with the general teaching of the Word? An answer to this question would lead any careful, unprejudiced searcher for truth to reject the interpretation that involves the doctrine of endless woe. We have abundantly shown that the general teaching of the scripture is overwhelmingly in favor of "the restitution of all things." How shall we understand then the undying worm and the quenchless fire? The worm in scripture is a symbol of corruption and death (see Job xvii. 14; xix. 26; xxiv. 20; Isa. xiv. 11). In accordance with this idea, an undying worm would be one that does not cease its devouring until that upon which it feeds is entirely consumed — a worm that cannot be interrupted or stopped. Worms feed upon dead carcasses; and this is in harmony with the parallel passage in Isa. lxvi. 24, that we have already considered, where it is plainly indicated

that the worm feeds upon dead carcasses, corpses; therefore this symbol does not teach endless life in misery. A quenchless fire is one that cannot be extinguished; it may *burn* out when all upon which it can feed is consumed, but it cannot be *put* out; a fire that cannot be quenched is not necessarily one that will burn forever, but simply one that will burn until everything combustible within its reach is consumed. Thus this symbol does not necessarily teach an endless hell.

Moreover, we have the most satisfactory evidence, right in the passage itself, that the Saviour never intended to teach endless torments thereby. Read the whole passage in the new version, beginning with verse 42, to the end of the chapter, and notice especially how verses 49 and 50 are connected by the conjunction “for,” and mark the significance of this connection. What connection is there between these last two verses and that which precedes, if the passage is to be understood as teaching endless torment? None at all. But if we understand the word “fire” to be used in the sense so often occurring elsewhere in scripture, *i.e.* as the means of purifying and purgation, then the force of the inferential “for,” and the relation of the accompanying declaration to the preceding verses, is fully apparent. Certainly, every one must see that something good and beneficial is referred to in these last two verses. “For every one shall be salted with fire. Salt is good, but if the salt have lost its saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace one with another.”

Notice that "every one" is to be salted with fire (compare 1 Cor. iii. 11-15); this certainly is for their good, for "salt is good," and fire is good, for some shall be "saved by fire." As another has said, "it is a purifying fire, that shall do the work of salt, when salt has failed; it is the refiner's fire of the day of the Lord (Mal. iii. 3) which shall purge and purify, as gold and silver. For it is not only those who have refused to make the great earthly sacrifices (cut off the hand or pluck out the eye) — not only the offenders of Christ's "little ones" (verse 42) — who are to be cast into hell fire, but *every one* shall be salted with fire. Of all interpretations of this passage, the least tenable, even on grammatical and exegetical grounds, is that which applies it to endless torments. Fire, in scripture, is the element of life (Isa. iv. 5), of purification (Mal. iii. 3), of atonement (Lev. xvi. 27), of transformation (2 Pet. iii. 10); but never of preservation alive for purposes of torment.

The Old-Testament use of the expression, "the fire shall not be quenched" (literally, the unquenchable fire), also shows plainly that no such doctrine as endless torments is meant to be taught by it.¹ The last place where it occurs (Isa. lxvi. 24), which is the one we have already noticed, is especially against the endless torment view, as we have seen; and this passage is the very one that Mark ix. 44 is

¹ This expression occurs: Lev. vi. 13; 2 Kings xxii. 17; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 25; Isa. xxxiv. 10; Jer. vii. 20; xvii. 27; xxi. 12; Ezek. xx. 47; Isa. lxvi. 24.

taken from. Thus, from all considerations, it is evident that this passage in Mark does not teach endless torment.

We come now to the final support of this doctrine, those scriptures that speak of the future punishment of the wicked as *everlasting*. This is the great stronghold of this doctrine; that is, in the estimation of those who believe it, or try to believe it, or think they ought to believe it. The strongest scripture upon this point is doubtless the last verse of Matt. xxv.: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

This passage is considered by many as absolutely decisive on this subject, teaching positively, as they suppose, the doctrine of endless torments. The argument is about as follows: The same word in the original (*æonion*) is used to express the duration of the *life* of the righteous and the *punishment* of the wicked; the life of the righteous is of course unending; hence the punishment of the wicked is also endless. This argument seems very conclusive to many minds, and yet a little study and comparison of scripture will show us that it is entirely misleading.

We have considered in chap. xii. the Bible teaching in regard to life and death; we have learned that "the life that is life indeed" is spiritual-mindedness, knowledge of God and Christ—this is life *æonial*; while death is the opposite of this; "to be carnally minded is death"; estrangement and alienation from God, and ignorance of him—this is death. It will be seen (as we have also already

noticed) that æonial life, thus defined by the Lord Jesus himself, is not a life of a certain duration, but of a certain kind; the word *æonial* is not a time word, denoting the extent of the life, but a descriptive word, denoting its nature. To illustrate, take the words *annual* and *diurnal*; these are time words meaning once a year, once a day — yearly, daily; again, take the words *vernal*, *autumnal*; these are descriptive words meaning spring-like, autumn-like, or “fallish,” as we sometimes say. Such a word is *æonial*, *i.e.* age-like, of or belonging to the future ages; anything is æonial that is of the same general character as those ages. Now notice how exactly this explanation harmonizes with direct scripture statements; æonial life is knowledge of God and Christ (John xvii. 3); and this — knowledge of God — is the one great characteristic of the future ages; in this respect those future ages are contrasted with the present and the past. Now (and in the past thus far) “Darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people”; “they know not, neither will they understand”; “God is not in all their thoughts.” This is the general condition of the world, “without God and with hope”; “alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them.” In contradistinction to this dark and dismal condition of things, the future ages shall be bright and glorious — flooded with the knowledge of God. “The knowledge of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea”; “and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying,

know the Lord; for all shall know him, from the least to the greatest." Take a concordance and look at the word *know*, and its various derivatives, knew, knowing, etc., and see what an immense amount of scripture there is about *knowing the Lord*; look up the subject throughout the Bible and notice how God makes himself known, and what a blessing it is to know him, and especially notice how *all* shall know him in the future ages, — and this is life æonial; *i.e.* the life of, or belonging to, "the ages to come." Surely it must be plain from these scriptures and considerations what æonial life is; not a life of a certain length, whether endless or otherwise, but a certain kind of life, or we might say a certain manner of *living* — in the knowledge of God, in harmony and union with him.

The absolute endlessness of the life of the redeemed is settled, not by this passage, but by other scripture perfectly plain and positive; as, for example, "Neither can they die any more" (Luke xx. 36); "This mortal shall put on immortality," literally, deathlessness, the same word that is applied to God, "who only hath immortality." Again, the redeemed are to be like Christ, and he is made a high priest, "not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an *endless* life" (Heb. vii. 16). The word here rendered endless is not æonial, but is one that means *indissoluble*, *indestructible*, and is never applied to the duration of future punishment. There is a difference, then, between "endless life" and "æonial life"; the former means an indestruc-

tible existence like God's; the latter is the life of the ages to come, knowledge of God and Christ.

Even when applied to God, *æonial* does not mean endless. It would, in fact, sound utterly incongruous to speak of the "endless God"; and no such idea is meant by the word. The phrase "*æonial God*" occurs only once in the New Testament (Rom. xvi. 26), and right in the same connection we have proof positive that the word does *not* mean endless; for first the apostle speaks of "*the æonial times*" (translated in King James' version, "since the world began," and absurdly rendered in the new version "times eternal"), in which case *æonial cannot* mean endless, for to talk about endless times is a flat contradiction of terms; then the apostle speaks of the "*æonial God*," by which expression he simply indicates the fact that God through "*æonial times*," *i.e.* age-times, is working out his gracious plans, his "purpose of the ages," until "all things are made new."

It is important to understand the real force of this word *æonial*; it is the main and almost the sole prop of the dogma of endless woe; if this word means *endless* — if that is its sole and necessary meaning — then that dogma is established, and we must accept the doctrine or reject the Bible. But no scholar will claim that the word of itself means endless; on the contrary, it is admitted on every hand, including writers that fully believe in the current creeds, that the word of itself does not mean endless. As an example of this I will refer to the Bible commentaries of Dr. Lang, which are of the highest authority in

the church. In the comment on Eccl. i. 4, "The earth abideth forever" (for the ages), we have the following criticism by Dr. Tayler Lewis on the words *olam* and *æon*. The reader will understand that the word *olam* is the Hebrew word equivalent to *æon* in the Greek. Dr. Lewis first admits (page 47) that these words do not mean eternity, because they both have plurals, *olamim*, *æones*, i.e. the ages; of course it would be absurd to talk about the *eternities*. Then on the following page (48) he says: "It may be thought that this view of *olam* and *æon* as having plurals, and therefore not in themselves denoting absolute endlessness, or infinity of time, must weaken the force of certain passages in the New Testament, especially of that most solemn sentence, Matt. xxv. 46. This, however, comes from a wrong view of what constitutes the real power of the impressive language there employed. The preacher, in contending with the Universalist, or Restorationist, would commit an error, and, it may be, suffer a failure in his argument, should he lay the whole stress of it on the etymological or historical significance of the words *æon*, *æones*, and attempt to prove that, of themselves, they necessarily carry the meaning of endless duration." After trying to show that although the idea of endlessness is not contained in the word *æonial*, yet it is implied in "that dread aspect of finality that appears, not in single words, but in the language taken as a whole," he continues thus: "Æonion, from its adjective form, may perhaps mean an existence or duration measured by æons or worlds (taken as

the measuring unit), just as our present world, or æon, is measured by years or centuries. But it would be more in accordance with the plainest etymological usage to give it simply the sense of *olamie* or *æonic*, or to regard it as denoting, like the Jewish *olam habba*, the *world to come*. These shall go away into the punishment of the world [age] to come, and these into the life of the world [age] to come. This is all we can etymologically make of the word in this passage."

This testimony from one thoroughly competent to decide as to the meaning of the original word, and one who believes in the eternity of punishment, is very conclusive. The word *æonial*, even he admits, and indeed declares, does not mean endless, but of, or belonging to, the ages to come.

All this evidence (and I might easily increase it to almost any extent) clearly shows the true meaning of this word *æonial*. Literally, it is simply "of the age," or, at most, "age-long"; and not in one single instance does the noun *æon* mean "eternity," or the adjective *æonion* mean "eternal," *i.e.* "endless." Thus, when the real significance of this word *æonial* is understood, it will be seen that it gives no support to the doctrine of endless torments. As *æonial* life is a certain *kind* of life, as we have seen, so *æonial* punishment is a certain kind of punishment; in neither case does the word mean endless; that is not the significance of the word at all; but it describes the nature of the life and of the punishment.

It is important to notice at this point that the word

rendered "punishment" in this passage refers especially to that kind of punishment that is for the correction and improvement of the one punished. The original word (*kolasin*) primarily means pruning; thence it comes to mean punishment, chastisement, correction. This word is entirely out of joint with the idea of endless torment, which would correct no one. We prune vines, trees, etc., to improve them; so the punishment indicated by this word is for the improvement and bettering of the subject. The use of this word in this scripture positively precludes the idea of eternal misery; it *could* not refer to any such punishment; in fact, it is a misnomer to call endless torment a punishment; for, properly used, the latter word carries the idea of correction, discipline, improvement; so with the original word in this passage — these shall go away into æonial pruning, or correction — this is the force of the word, and thus it may be seen that this word is in perfect harmony with the meaning of æonial, and entirely out of harmony with the endless torment idea. The force of the passage is that the wicked shall be subjected to the punishment, the correction, the discipline of the future ages, while the righteous shall enjoy the life of that bright era. We have seen that the future ages are the periods of judgment, probation, trial, and unto this judgment shall "they that have done evil" come forth, and thereby shall they be corrected. We have also seen what the life of those ages is — knowledge of God and Christ flooding the earth, filling every heart — this is the life æonial, and unto this life shall

“they that have done good” come forth; and so the one class shall go forth unto æonial punishment, and the other into life æonial; but in neither case does the word mean endless; much less does it have any reference to never-ending misery. These considerations remove this word also from the support of the dogma we oppose, and leave it without any scriptural support whatever.

Thus we have examined all the scripture that can by any means be made to give support to this dogma of endless woe. Some other scriptures may occur to the reader that are supposed to favor this doctrine (like, for instance, Heb. vi. 4-6, and x. 26-31), but if these passages be carefully considered, it will be seen that, however they be understood, — even though they be taken to teach a hopeless, remediless doom, — still there is nothing in them to necessarily imply endless, conscious suffering. If this awful doctrine has any scriptural support, it must come from just two classes of scripture; viz. those that speak of the undying worm and the quenchless fire, and those that represent the punishment of the wicked as æonial; these two props constitute its sole scriptural support; or, at least, it will be admitted by the strongest advocate of this doctrine, that if these two props were removed, the doctrine would fall, for its inferential support from other doubtful scripture would not sustain it for a moment without these. Now I ask the candid reader if it has not been shown in this chapter that the doctrine of endless woe is not sustained by these two classes of scripture? At

least, it must be admitted that another explanation of these scriptures is possible; and this explanation is fully sustained, as we have seen, by other scripture, and by the general teaching of the Word; this explanation must be ignored by those who hold to the eternal torment view, and they must insist upon the one interpretation of these scriptures that harmonizes with their view, and so build the whole monstrous dogma upon these two props; surely it is exceedingly unwise to base such a tremendous tenet upon so scant and so doubtful a foundation; and especially since in so doing one must oppose the whole sweep and scope of Bible teaching, which, as we have abundantly shown, is grandly accordant with the view of the final abolishment of all evil, and the “restitution of all things.” We have seen how true this is of the Old Testament, and many passages to the same effect have also been cited from the New Testament; but we will briefly refer to still other scripture in this line, that the reader may more clearly realize and appreciate this general teaching of the Word. I shall quote or refer to these scriptures with few comments, as the simple Bible language is abundantly plain enough to fully establish the truth.

“The Son of man is come to save that which was lost.” Will he do it, or will there be lost ones forever? “God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.” Here we have the purpose announced for which Christ was sent into the world — “that the world through him might be saved”;

will this purpose be carried out? will the world be saved? Jesus is the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." If the sin of the world be taken away, will not the world thereby become sinless (see also John iv. 42; vi. 33, 48, 51)? "Jesus giveth life unto the world." John xii. 32, 47: "I will draw all men unto me"; also 1 John ii. 2: "He is the propitiation [mercy-seat] for the sins of the whole world"; also 1 John iii. 8; iv. 14.

Now let us look at the writings of the Apostle Paul. The great apostle did not hesitate to affirm that he had not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God, and that he had kept back nothing that was profitable to the church (Acts xx. 20, 27), and yet we do not find one single passage in all his writings (constituting as they do a very large portion of the New-Testament scriptures) that, properly interpreted, gives any support to the doctrine of endless woe. There is one passage in 2 Thess. i. 9 which speaks of certain ones being punished with "everlasting destruction"; but all the force this passage has in favor of endless torments is derived from the word *æonial*, rendered "everlasting," and that we have shown does not mean endless; and even if it did, this passage would not teach endless, conscious suffering, but rather annihilation; for endless destruction would seem to be total and absolute extinction of being, rather than an eternal life in misery. So also with other declarations that the apostle makes, like those for instance in Heb. vi. and x.; though we might put upon them the harshest construction possible, yet

they cannot be made of themselves to imply endless, conscious suffering. It is impossible to suppose that Paul could have believed in this tremendous doctrine, and yet give no plain statement of it in all his writings that have come down to us; this condition of things seems to indicate that he believed nothing of the kind; and this is all the more certain when we notice what Paul left *unsaid* in various passages, where, if he had believed this dogma, he could scarcely have failed of announcing it in unmistakable terms; see, for example, Rom. ii. 8, 9. Here the apostle is declaring in set terms the punishment of the wicked, and yet he says not one word of any such thing as an endless hell; is it possible that Paul could have believed in this dogma and yet not have given some expression of it in such connection? See, again, Gal. v. 19-21: The apostle here enumerates the "works of the flesh," and then he declares "they which do such things shall" — what? be lost forever? be consigned to an endless hell? This is what we should expect him to say had he believed in that doctrine. But he simply says, "shall not inherit the kingdom of God"; they may be saved "so as by fire"; but they shall not obtain the "high calling." In the same way notice Phil. iii. 18, 19. The above facts, that Paul nowhere enunciates this dreadful doctrine, and the marked omission of it in connections where, had he believed it, he could hardly have failed to have given expression to it, are to me strong evidence that the apostle believed no such doctrine.

Having thus noticed the significance of what Paul

left *unsaid*, we pass to observe the numerous expressions and declarations of infinite grace and universal hope with which his writings abound, which, while they are totally irreconcilable with the endless torment view, are most perfectly in harmony with the final “restitution of all things.”

First, I ask the reader to study the fifth chapter of Romans, and notice Paul’s “much mores”; see what the commentaries say about this chapter, and then study it for yourself and mark how the apostle labors to set forth the superabounding grace of God — more than sufficient — ay, “*much* more” — to undo and remedy all the baneful effects of sin. “Where sin abounded grace did much more abound; that *as* sin has reigned unto death [*i.e.* universally, over all the race], *even so* might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

What more could be said to prove the final and universal “restitution of all things”? — to indicate the glorious fact that the provision God has made for man’s recovery from the fall, is more than amply sufficient to accomplish that object, and that grace shall finally have a complete and absolute triumph? Can such language as this be made to comport with the eternity of evil? Is it possible to reconcile it with a doctrine which involves God in the necessity of maintaining forever a demon-kept prison-house, wherein shall be incarcerated the incorrigible and blaspheming wretches whom he has been unable to redeem by his grace or to conquer by his love? And finally, is it possible that Paul could have believed in endless

torments and yet utter such words as these? What will you do with this scripture? Will you try to harmonize the very few texts that seem to favor endless punishment with this glorious declaration of universal redemption; or will you crush out the life and soul of this passage in order to make it comport with a doctrine of horror that makes God's redemptive scheme a partial failure, and stamps his creative work as a wretched abortion? For my part, I glory in this scripture; I would not abate its universality a hair's breadth; but would rather thank God that his grace is so immense that it sinks, and overwhelms, and obliterates the sin — "the sin of the world" — so that at last there shall be a stainless and a perfect creation.

We have studied a portion of the eighth chapter of Romans in chap. iv., and have seen how broad and universal is its teaching in regard to the final deliverance of "the whole creation"; read the whole chapter in this connection, and mark especially its closing words. The eleventh chapter of this same epistle is another wonderful setting forth of the superabounding grace of God. "God hath concluded all in unbelief that he might have mercy upon all." Well may we exclaim, in view of such wonderful grace, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!" Now see 1 Cor. xv.: "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." See also 2 Cor. v. 18-21; Eph. i. 7-10; Phil. ii. 10, 11; in connection with this last

passage see Isa. xlv. 20-24, with Paul's comment on it in Rom. xiv. 11, new version, margin — "every knee shall bow and every tongue shall *give praise* to God"; and finally, see the fulfilment of this glorious prediction set forth in Rev. v. 13, new version, where John declares that he heard "every created thing" praising God. I should like to know where there is any room in this grand peace jubilee of the universe for an endless hell, with its countless damned, making an eternal discord in this glad acclaim of praise?

Furthermore, see Phil. iii. 21; Col. i. 20; 1 Tim. ii. 4-6; Tit. ii. 11, new version. I might quote many other scriptures to the same effect, but the limits of this work forbid. I have cited enough to show that the general drift of the entire Word is utterly opposed to the doctrine against which I write, and is overwhelmingly in favor of the final deliverance of the "whole creation." Suppose there were a half-dozen scriptures in the Bible that might be made to teach endless torments, yet these scriptures being opposed to the scores that I have quoted on the other side, what ought we to do? Try to harmonize the scores with the half-dozen? Surely not, but to harmonize the half-dozen with the scores. Have I not shown that the general drift and tenor of all scripture is opposed to endless punishment? Where one passage can be quoted that seems to favor that view, a dozen at least may be cited to oppose it. What, then, should be our conclusion? Nothing else but that the dogma of endless torments must be false; and this ought to be our conclusion even though

there should be some scriptures that seemed to *plainly* support it. We should endeavor to reconcile the few with the many, rather than the many with the few. But in our examination we have found that this doctrine has barely two props upon which it can lean, and these can be readily reconciled with the opposite view, "the restitution of all things." Where, then, is the ground for this awful doctrine to stand upon? It has no true scriptural foundation, surely. Who wants to cling to it, then? For my part, I am glad to shake it off as a horrible nightmare of the past, and walk out into the glorious sunlight of a "larger hope," that lifts the veil of a bright and happy future for every son and daughter of the race.

CHAPTER XV.

CREATION.

IN creation God gives outwardness, *existence*, to the archetypal thoughts of his mind. Everything in creation expresses a divine thought; that divine thought is its *spirit*; *i.e.* its real, true meaning in the economy of God; and to apprehend that spirit is to recognize God in his works; and to recognize or know God is life: thus creation is always consummated in *life* — that is its end; though it be but the creation of a mass of inanimate clay, the purpose of such creation ever and always, in the last analysis, is life; and since the highest life — or perhaps we can better understand it if we say, the highest *living* — is that of the Creator himself, hence all creation tends to bring us to the life of the Creator; and thus in an endless, but ever-widening circle, does God *express* himself in creation, that man may at the last receive his exact *impress*; it was only by going out of himself, so to speak, that God could ever bring man *into* himself, and thus effect the at-one-ment. “That they all may be one” — “perfect in one”; in no other way, except in *one*, could we become perfect — in God’s image and likeness.

I have said that everything in creation expresses a divine thought, and that this divine thought is its *spirit*, or true meaning in God's universe. In other words, everything is a revelation of God, which proposition necessarily follows from the great truth we have already learned that God is in everything, or all things are of God. Everything in nature and providence reveals God, every rock, every blade of grass, every plant—the very weeds that grow in our gardens, as well as the grander and mightier works of nature. I cannot think that anything is so small or so insignificant that its existence is purposeless; whatever *is*, is for a purpose, and that purpose is God's thought in its creation; and this is true, not only of the works of nature, great and small, but also of the events of God's providence, whether they come to us individually, or to communities, states, nations, or the world at large,—all reveal God. There is something of God in all things, and *that* is its spirit. So, too, all truth and knowledge is of God; whether it be the truths of mathematics or of revelation; whether it be the knowledge of how to tell the age of a horse by looking into his mouth, or the knowledge that fits the saint to “judge angels” (1 Cor. vi. 3); and thus all truth is sacred; he who plies a mechanical trade, or worthily fills a school-teacher's place, or honestly endeavors to alleviate the physical sufferings of his fellows, is engaged in a work as holy as he who preaches the gospel; all truth in every department should be pursued with the object to “find out God” (Job xi. 7), and when

it is thus sought the secular and the sacred will be blended into one, and head and heart shall be united.

Pilate asked the question — of him who *is* the truth — “What is truth?” but he did not wait for an answer because he was not “of the truth”; if I err not, an exhaustive answer to Pilate’s question would be — *knowledge of God*; all truth, abstract or concrete, is knowledge of God — in nature or in providence or in grace, the lowliest and simplest truth, as well as the highest and most profound. To the one who realizes this, everything that comes to him, and all things around him, are a continual surprise and delight — a perfect transcript (so far as he can understand it) of the divine mind; he walks through the world with sandals removed, as treading on holy ground, everywhere stamped with the footprints of the Creator — and with head uncovered as one who at any turn may meet his Lord.

With many Christians their religion is something entirely external; it is not a life, but simply a dress — a cloak. To such ones God is far off. He is not available for help and counsel and guidance in ordinary matters. He is a being that they must approach only at stated intervals, and with a solemn face and a particular attitude; the religious life of such ones is exceedingly strained and artificial; there is altogether too much self-consciousness, and too much regard for the “proprieties” of the occasion. We have read perhaps how the children of some earthly monarchs visit their parents at stated times. A certain hour

of the day or week is set apart for the ceremony. The royal parents are seated in state, the children, accompanied by their nurses and attendants and dressed with great precision, appear and, advancing to the king and queen, kneel and kiss their hands, and after a few formal words they retire, all the time preserving an air of great gravity and decorum. In about the same way do very many Christians hold themselves toward their Heavenly Father. If their religion does not creep it struts, and that is worse; approach to God is an unusual and a state occasion; certain ceremonies and solemnities must always be resorted to, and the whole affair is made a matter of form and conventionality.

Now all this simply shows how artificial and unreal their religious life is; or rather, it shows that their religion is not life at all, but merely an outside garment to be put on for particular occasions, and when the occasion is past to be laid aside entirely until another such occasion. What then is the real life of such ones? You will not find out by calling upon them or by meeting them occasionally in a prayer-meeting or a social gathering; on such occasions also they have a conventional garment which completely disguises the real life. Go and live with them every day in the week for a year—in the kitchen, in the nursery, and in all the household cares and duties; or on the street, in the work-shop, in the counting-room, and amid all the intricacies and perplexities of a business life. What for? to discover their faults and failings? Bless you, no. You had better not look for

them, lest you be put to shame at their superiority over yourself, or lest you be deceived and puffed up with spiritual pride by the idea that you are better than they. All you need to know is, *How much they make of God*. What place, if any, does he occupy in their lives? and thus you will perceive at once whether they have the life of God or not. When we look thus into the lives of very many people we find them almost entirely destitute of the divine element. "God is not in all their thought"; they are practically god-less, "without God."

Now how radically and materially different is the life of one who sees "God in everything!" Who refers all things to him; who receives all things as from him. Who admits no second causes, but recognizes only the first great Cause. Like Job, who referred even "the works of the devil" to God; for he says, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" It was Satan who was bringing evil upon Job, but the old patriarch refuses to recognize him, but attributes it all (and rightly, too) to God. So "the man of God" consciously lives and moves, and has his being in Him. He lives, in his measure, "the life of God"; that is to say, he lives after God's style.

Perhaps the greatest mystery that presents itself to us in this world of mystery is the mystery of life. What *is* life? What is it in its essence? We do not know: all we know about it is its phenomena, its outward manifestations; what it is in itself is utterly unknown to us; hence, when we talk about different

kinds of life, what we really mean is different kinds of *living*. Of life in itself of any kind we know nothing; but in the *manner* of life we recognize great differences. When we say a sailor's life is a dog's life, we mean that their manner of life is hard and disagreeable. In the same way we say a soldier's life is one of perils and deprivation; of a rich man we say, he lives the life of a prince; of a gay and frivolous woman, her's is a butterfly existence; of a poor man, his is a life of toil and want, etc., etc. In all such cases of the use of the term life, we are not referring to different kinds of *life* considered in its essence, but of different manners or styles of *living*. The Bible uses the word in the same way. For example, Jesus said, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a man's *life* consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesses." Again he says, "Take no thought for your *life*, what ye shall eat, neither for the body, what ye shall put on; the *life* is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment." Our Lord is not here speaking of life in itself, — bare existence, — but of a person's manner or style of living.

Now when I speak of possessing the life of God, I mean that in some slight degree the believer may live after God's style. He may in a measure have his peace; he may avail himself of God's unchangeableness; he may by faith make God's omnipotence his own (Mark x. 27 with ix. 23), and so, hiding under the shadow of the Almighty, he may become a child of the Highest (Luke vi. 35) in all kindness, mercy, forbearance, and love; in a word, he may view all

things from God's standpoint, instead of from man's, and so, in a measure, live the life of God; we may come into such close relationship to him as that our life in a great measure will run along in harmony with his; we shall live with God; his manner of life will be ours; his standpoint will be ours; his apprehension of and attitude toward creation will be ours; his thoughts and feelings will be ours; we may even say his attributes will be ours, his peace, his power, his wisdom, his goodness — himself, will be ours: our life will blend with his; his life will become ours. "For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, *all* are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." All this, of course, is not in its perfection, — not in its fulness, — it is not "what we shall be"; *that* "doth not yet appear"; and yet it is a real experience, a positive fact — the life of God begun here and now, although, in the perfect and fullest sense we are not made alive until "his coming" (1 Cor. xv. 23).

Surely the advanced Christian is conscious of such a life begun in him, "the inward man"; and it is "being renewed day by day"; it is a secret, hidden life, "which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it"; it makes him totally different from the natural man; everything looks different to him from what it does to the one who is destitute of this life; the interpretation that he would put upon events and the conclusions he would draw therefrom, are entirely different, and in fact oftentimes directly opposite to the

worldly man's interpretations and conclusions ; where the latter sees chance, or wicked men, or perhaps the devil, the former sees only God ; where the latter feels fretted, perplexed, angry, indignant, rebellious, the former finds reason for praise, gratitude, and thanksgiving ; to him "all things are of God," and hence all things are good, and will result in good ; and there is nothing that can possibly take place in all the wide circle of the universe that shall not in the end redound to God's honor and glory, and the highest welfare of all his creatures.

And now mark, all this is part and parcel of the creative process, bringing the creature to the life of the Creator, which is the end of creation. There is no pleasure in lifeless things or things non-intelligent, only as they contribute in some way to the enjoyment and development of *life* ; hence, I repeat, *life* — "the life of God" — is to the end of creation. We see also in this view how all things contribute to the perfection of creation, and how all things are needful to that end. Everything gives God occasion and opportunity to reveal himself to man ; for this purpose nothing comes amiss ; all things to this end can be utilized, the evil as well as the good. The Bible is full of illustrations of this truth, viz. how God reveals himself to man by means of all things, and, on the natural plane, especially by evil things. For this purpose he manifested his power and his wrath upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians (Ex. vii. 5, 17 ; xiv. 4, 18), hardening his heart that he should not let the people go, that he might work all his pleasure upon

that devoted people, "*to the end* that they might know the Lord" (Ex. viii. 22). "Even for this same purpose did God raise Pharaoh up, that he might show his power in him, and that his name might be declared throughout all the earth"; and "who art thou, O man, that repliest against God? shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" (Rom. ix.). Here again is a very striking illustration of how "all things are of God." He is the potter; man is the clay in his hands (Isa. lxiv. 8); also we see how "he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," and "none can stay his hands, or say unto him, what doest thou?" This case also illustrates how God controls and makes use of evil, and for what purpose. Surely this whole matter of Israel's slavery in Egypt was a great evil, and their haughty taskmasters were exceedingly wicked in their cruelty and injustice, and the king endorsed it all, and he and his subjects were justly punished; and yet the whole thing was "of God." Centuries before, God had foretold that his people should go down into Egypt and be afflicted four hundred years (Gen. xv. 13). When the time came God sent them down there (Gen. xlv. 3); it was God also who turned the hearts of the Egyptians to hate his people, and to deal deceitfully with them (Psa. cv. 25), and he it was who hardened Pharaoh's heart that he should not let them go until he had wrought out all his mighty

judgments upon them. Eleven times in this account is it said that God hardened Pharaoh's heart; and Paul makes the statement general in Rom. ix. "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." The apparent injustice of this entirely disappears in the light of the plan of the ages; from the standpoint of orthodoxism the account cannot be reconciled with justice, equity, and righteousness; but in the light of the Bible teaching of the redemptive work of the promised seed in the future ages, all may be adjusted and readily explained, as the intelligent and thoughtful reader will doubtless perceive; and finally, the purpose of all this was that "all the earth" might *know the Lord*; it was an occasion especially prepared beforehand—for this same purpose was Pharaoh raised up—to the end that God might reveal himself, in certain aspects of his character, to man. If the reader will follow out this thought throughout the Bible (see the concordance on the word *know*), he will be surprised, if he has not studied it before, at the amount of scripture bearing upon this truth.

Thus God reveals himself in all things—makes himself known; and to know God is life, and life is the end of creation; hence all things contribute to the creation of man—all things tend to bring us to God's image and likeness; if all things make God known, as they certainly do, since he is in all things, then all things tend to life, since to know God is life, and this is the consummation of creation. Thus, if I err not, we arrive at the true idea of creation, and

are able to perceive its process through the natural as well as the spiritual.

Thus, moreover, we may perceive how certain it is that the original plan of God, which has never been altered or disarranged in the least degree, will be carried out. It is because Christians fail to see that man is not yet created, and that everything around him is part and parcel of the creative process, that they practically make his salvation depend on himself. According to the common idea, God started everything all right; it was by the sin of man that everything was made all wrong, and it is a great mercy on the part of God, entirely unmerited by man, that he has made any provision at all whereby even a portion of the race may be saved; if our theology is based upon such an error as this, it is no wonder that it is still further vitiated by the idea that man's salvation depends on himself. But we have seen how false and misleading is this idea; we are God's workmanship; we are God's husbandry, God's building, clay in the hands of the potter; that is, so far as the final accomplishment of the purpose of God is concerned; intermediately man is free, but beginnings and endings are in God's hands—"I am the first, and I am the last," saith the Lord; and all this is the creative process; if Christians could only see this, they would never think of such a thing as making man's perfection depend on himself; for surely in his creative work God needs no assistance; if man's salvation is a new creation, the consummation of which is life, then surely it must be all of

God, and every son and daughter of the race may rest assured that God's purpose in them individually will be ultimately accomplished. I, as God's offspring (Acts xvii. 28; compare Psa. lxxxii. 6), may be absolutely sure that my Father and my Creator will sometime bring me into harmony with himself; for it is impossible to believe that any portion of his creation will be out of harmony and at variance with him through all eternity; especially so, since he plainly declares that he will ultimately "reconcile all things to himself."

I take it that God has a definite purpose in the creation of everything, a definite end in view, and that end is certain to be reached soon or later; in other words, every creature ultimately fulfils the purpose of the Creator in its creation. To suppose otherwise would be to suppose a failure on the part of the Creator, which is unthinkable. The believer's attitude toward God then might be thus expressed: "God has created me for a definite purpose, that purpose I shall ultimately fulfil in his economy; it is a wise and good purpose, one with which I should be perfectly satisfied and contented if I only understood it all; toward that end I am continually moving, all things tend to advance me in that one direction, and I shall surely arrive, I shall surely fulfil the purpose of my creation, and all I have to do is to leave myself in his hands as clay in the hands of the potter, to be fashioned according to his will." It is a great satisfaction and pleasure to think of our relationship to God in this light. God has something

in his mind to make of me, and I shall surely become that something; and furthermore, since God is wise and good, that something will please and satisfy *me* perfectly. When I reach the place for which God created me, and for which he has fitted me, I shall have no regret that it is not another place; but I shall realize that it is *my* place and shall be *satisfied*, — perfectly satisfied with the accomplishment of the ever blessed and good will of God *in me*. I am a seed, destined to a certain result ultimately; the seed may pass through many vicissitudes in reaching that result, — like the seed in the hand of the Egyptian mummy lying dormant for a thousand years, — but still its end is fixed, and that end it will reach, and none other. I may frustrate the *grace* of God (Gal. ii. 21), but I cannot frustrate his *will*. He may say, “let him alone, he is joined to his idol,” but “he will not cast off forever”; soon or later “he will return, and have compassion, and cast all our sins behind our backs.” “He turneth man to destruction and saith, return, ye children of men.” I may be disappointed many times in failing to be what I would *like* to be, and what I imagine I might have been, and so my experience will correspond to the poet’s words —

“Of all sad words by tongue or pen,
The saddest are these — it might have been.”

And this experience is a part of my training, and by it I am continually being advanced toward what in the providence of God *I am to be*; and thus —

“ *Our* place is kept, and it will wait,
Ready for us to fill it, soon or late :
No star is ever lost we once have seen,
We always may be what we might have been ;
Since good, though only thought, has life and breath,
And evil in its nature is decay,
And *any* hour may blot it all away.”

Let no one say, “This is fatalism.” Nay, it is godism — if I may reverently use such an expression. No one need fear a fatalism that makes God supreme, absolute, almighty. In the foregoing remarks I am dealing with finalities. God is the first and the last ; man is free and responsible intermediately ; but God has *his* way ultimately. He is *able* to subdue, *i.e.* to harmonize, all things unto himself ; himself is love, and love has only one way of subduing — by harmonizing ; and this glorious consummation will be reached when *all* are gathered together in *one* (Eph. i. 10), and God is all *in* all.

Thus may the trusting child “rest in God,” both for himself and for the “whole creation,” and with the utmost confidence he may commit all his interests unto Him as unto

“A FAITHFUL CREATOR.”

THE SPIRIT OF THE WORD.

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Devoted to the exposition of the New-Testament doctrine of "The restitution of all things" (Acts iii. 21) in the bright and glorious "Ages to come" (Eph. ii. 7).

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